

Guhyagarbha Tantra (with Commentary)

by Gyurme Dorje | 1987 | 304,894 words
Buddhism Tibetan Buddhism

Summary: The English translation of the Guhyagarbha Tantra, including Longchenpa's commentary from the 14th century. The whole work is presented as a critical investigation into the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, of which the Guhyagarbhatantra is its principle text. It contains twenty-two chapters teaching the essence and practice of Mahayoga, which states that "liberation is obtained through union with the indivisible superior truth by relying emphatically on the creation stage of skillful means".

Mahayoga is a Sanskrit word, literally meaning "great union (of the mind with non-dual truth)". The view of Mahayoga holds (a) ultimate truth to be spontaneous awareness without conceptual elaboration, (b) relative truth to be the ideas or mental energy of that awareness which manifest as a mandala of Buddha-body and pristine cognition, and (c) the superior indivisible truth to be the unity of these two—emptiness and pure appearance.

The Guhyagarbha Tantra is known in Tibetan as rgyud gsang ba'i snying po. Longchenpa is spelled as kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's. His commentary is known as phyogs-bcu mun-sel.

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Note: Since this text is associated with Vajrayana practice there might be restrictions in place for practitioners of the same.

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This work is a critical presentation of original sources relating to the Mahāyoga and Atiyoga traditions of the rNying-ma school of Tibetan Buddhism, namely, the principal tantra-text of that school, Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra, and kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's commentary, phyogs-bcu mun-sel. It comprises an Introduction, an edition of the Tibetan root-text, an annotated translation and bibliography.

i) The introduction considers: the position of the three inner classes of tantra (nane-rgyud sde-gsum) within the rNying-ma tradition; the extant texts of the rgyud-sde and sgrub-sde divisions of Mahāyoga within the bka'-'gyur and the rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum and the transmission of the latter from its compilation until recent times; the relationship between the eighteen tantras of the rgyud-sde section and the sgyu-'phrul cycle; the contents of the cycle and the position of the long, medium and short versions of the Guhyagarbha within it; the structured contents of this root-tantra; the controversy surrounding its origins; the Indian historical perspective and commentaries; the Tibetan translations; the practical synthesis of mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum; the bka'-ma lineages with emphasis on the relevant indigenous Tibetan commentaries; the gter-ma related literature; ten philosophical topics elaborated in the Guhyagarbha: the two exegetical interpretations; and the editions of the source materials which have been consulted.

ii) The edition of the root-text is based, in the absence of Sanskrit ms., on extant Tibetan versions found in the bka'-'gyur and the rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum, the Karma'i Chos-sgar blockprint, and the versions utilised by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī in their commentaries.

iii) The translation of the root-tantra is accompanied by the full text of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's interlinear sections (gzhung-don). each of which is preceded by an overview (spyi-don).

iv) The bibliography has two sections, the first comprising those texts cited by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in phyogs-bcu mun-sel, and the second those works referred to in the introduction and annotations.

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Over several years. while working on the translation and edition of the late bDud-'joms Rin-po-che's Nyingma School Tibetan Buddhism; Its

Fundamentals and History. I became increasingly aware of the central importance of the Guhyagarbhatantra and the esteem in which it is held by the rNying-ma-pa. In order to open up and consolidate our understanding of that eighth century tradition, clearly this basic text would have to be established in a critical edition alongside its commentaries, and, as more primary sources are published in India, it would be an essential task for Tibetologists to make some of them accessible to western scholarship for the first time. This would also give some impetus to the current revival of the rNying-ma communities in Nepal, India, and indeed Tibet, where the tradition itself has been made aware of the value of western scholarship, largely through the efforts of E. Gene Smith. It is therefore with these two aims that I embarked on the present study. Each chapter of the roottantra is accompanied by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's interlinear commentary, and in the course of annotation, his interpretations are juxtaposed with those of Lo-chen Dharmasri. Between them, these commentators represent the two major exegetical traditions of the Guhyagarbha in Tibet. Of course, this study is by no means the definitive statement on the Guhyagarbhatantra. Only when all extant commentaries have been fully translated and compared could such a conclusive treatise ever be written. In the meantime, it is hoped that the intricacies of kLong-chen-pa's exegesis will augment our understanding of the relationship between Mahāyoga and Atiyoga, and open up further avenues for research in this field.

The problems involved in the interpretation of tantra-texts like the Guhyagarbha are immense, and errors are virtually unavoidable. Quite apart from the absence of the original Sanskrit manuscripts, there are linguistic obscurities in the Tibetan which even the surviving oral tradition is unable to resolve. This has been explicitly stated by Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, who is revered as the greatest living authority on the rNying-ma school. I would therefore ask those responsible for maintaining this tradition to understand the underlying motivation and not to look too harshly on my errors or omissions. Many of these problems will be confronted in the course of the annotations, and I wish, at this point, to acknowledge the assistance of all those scholars who devoted time and energy to the task.

Firstly, my thanks are due to Phillip Denwood, Lecturer in Tibetan at SOAS, who supervised the research in a methodical, sympathetic and supportive manner and offered much sound advice on problems relating to language and the architecture of the vimāna in particular. Humble thanks are also due to H.H. Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche who gave much of his precious time to my tiresome questions during his sojourn in the Dordogne, in June, 1986. Others scholars who assisted at that time were Dzokchen Khenpo Thupten, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, Tulku Perna Wangyal, and Konchok Tenzin. Khenpo Thupten in particular addressed himself to the linguistic and technical problems with great enthusiasm. I am also indebted to the library of SOAS, University of London, for access to library and microfiche facilities, to Lama Chime of the British Library Oriental Manuscripts Division, to Michael O'Keefe of the India Office Library, and to Christian Bruyat at the Tibetan library of the Association de Chanteloube in the Dordogne for making source materials available. Additional thanks are due to Dr Tadeusz Skorupski of SOAS, who kindly

offered advice on certain Indic source materials, and to Matthew Kapstein of the University of Chicago who in past years worked with me to construct the technical English vocabulary employed in this and other studies. Above all, X wish to express my gratitude to the British Academy for their generous studentship awarded from 1983-1986, to SOAS for the Millicent Harrington Award covering the same period, and to Dr John Brockington, Senior Lecturer in Sanskrit at Edinburgh University, and Dr Michael Aris of Wolfson College, Oxford for supporting my initial application to the Academy. Finally, thanks are due to Mike Farmer who provided word-processing facilities, without which the project would never have been completed in three years.

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1. The rNying-ma School and the Three Inner Classes of Tantra

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The maṇḍala of the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities first attracted attention outside Tibet through popular translations of the bar-do thos-grol, a section of Karma gLing-pa's zhi-khro.[1] dgongs-pa rang-grol. Little is known, however, of the tantra on which this maṇḍala and its gter-ma cycles are based. The Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra is a

principal text of the rNying-ma or "ancient translation school" (snga-'gyur rnying-ma), the oldest tradition of Tibetan Buddhism which has maintained the teaching-cycles and texts introduced to Tibet during the royal dynastic period through to the epoch of the Indian scholar Smṛtijñānakīrti and prior to that of Lo-chen Rin-chen bZang-po (958-1055).[2] The rNying-ma-pa are those who have adhered to this "earlier propagation" (snga-dar) and cultivated its traditions over succeeding centuries through study, meditation, composition, and the revelation of concealed texts or treasures (gter-ma). A comprehensive account of the philosophical position and historical background of this school is found in my edited translation of bDud-'Joms Rin-po-che's modern compilation, *The Nyingma School Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*. [3] In contrast, the adherents of the later Buddhist lineages which spread forth in Tibet during the "subsequent propagation" (phvi-dar)—the bKa-gdams-pa, Sa-skya-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa—are commonly known as gSar-ma-pa, "followers of the a new schools". [4]

While the designations "rNying-ma" and "gSar-ma" were retrospectively applied, by the eleventh century the two periods of Buddhist expansion in Tibet had become sufficiently distinguishable to prompt Rong-zom Pandita's following observation in the dkon-mchog 'grel, which attributes six superiorities to the ancient translations: [5]

First, concerning the greatness of the benefactors who introduced them: Since the benefactors of the ancient translation period were the three ancestral rulers, who were the sublime Lords of the Three Families in kingly guise, they were unlike the benefactors of the later translation period. [6]

Second, concerning the locations in which they were translated and established: Since the ancient translations were accomplished in such emanated temples as bSam-yas and the other doctrinal centres of the past, high and low, they are unlike those translated in the monastic grottoes of today. [7]

Third, concerning the distinctions of the translators: Those doctrines were translated by emanational translators, the translators of the past such as Vairocana, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, lCog-ro klu'i rgyal-mtshan, Zhang Ye-shes sDe, rMa Rin-chen mChog, and gNyags Jñānakumāra. Thus, they are unlike the translations made by the translators of today, who pass the summer in Mang-yul and travel to India and Nepal for a short time during the winter. [8]

Fourth, concerning the distinctions of the scholars (who supervised the ancient translations): Those doctrines were introduced by buddhas and sublime bodhisattvas abiding on the great levels, (namely) the scholars of the past such as the preceptor Śāntarakṣita, Buddhaghya, the great master Padmākara and the great paṇḍita Vimalamitra. Thus, they were unlike the scholars of today who wander about in search of gold. [9]

Fifth, concerning the distinctions of the blossoms (offered) as the basis for commissioning (the translations): In the past the doctrines were

requested with offerings of gold weighed out in deerskin pouches, or by the measure. Thus, they were unlike the requests made (by disciples of) the present day with one or two gold bits drawn from under their own arms.[10]

Sixth, concerning the distinctions of the doctrine itself: The translations of the past were completed at a time when the doctrine of the Buddha reached its zenith in India. Furthermore, there were tantras which did not even exist in India proper, which were retained by bodhisattvas, accomplished masters, awareness-holders and *ḍākinīs* who had obtained their empowerments. They were taken from pure lands, and from regions of Jambudvīpa such as Śīghala and Oḍḍiyāna in the west, through the arrayed miraculous powers of the the great master Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and others, and then translated (in Tibet). Thus, many (doctrines) which were completely unknown to the scholars and accomplished masters of India arrived to become the meritorious fortune of Tibet.[11]

Furthermore, concerns the translations themselves: Since the translators of the past were emanations, they established the meanings correctly. For this reason their works are easy to understand and, on plumbins their depths, the blessing is great. But the translators of the later period were unable to render the meanings and made lexical translations following (merely) the arrangement of the Sanskrit texts. Consequently, their forced terminology is hard to understand, and on plumbins the depths the blessing is slight. Therefore, they are dissimilar.[12]

To understand Rons-zom-pa's final point, one might well make a comparison between the simple versification of the Guhyagarbha and that of the Kālacakratāntra, which is considered by many to epitomise the most complex of the later translations.[13] Further linguistic distinctions between these two translation methodologies will be considered below in the context of the debate surrounding the origins of our tantra-text.

Despite Rons-zom-pa's entrenched position which was designed purposefully to counter the prejudice expressed against the ancient tantras by certain advocates of the new translation system, the rNying-ma tradition for the most part remained aloof from the subsequent sectarian rivalries of Tibetan political life—whether in the conflict between Sa-skya and 'Bri-gung or in the civil war between the Karma-pa-backed gTsang-pa administration and the dGe-lugs-pa hierarchy.[14] Their philosophy and spirituality have however continued to exert influence on the later traditions until recent times. Important figures such as Karma-pa III Rang-byung rDo-rje (1281-1339), gYung-ston rDo-rje dPal (1284-1365), Dalai Lama V (1617-1682), 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po (1820-1892) and 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-1899) have contributed immensely to the development of the rNying-ma teachings despite their affiliation with other schools.[15] As a study of the chos-'byung genre reveals, Tibet's great thinkers, scholars and meditators from all traditions could freely teach each other without sectarian inhibitions.[16]

It is in the rNying-ma system that the Buddhist teachings are classified into a hierarchical gradation of nine vehicles or nine sequences of the

vehicle (theg-pa rim-pa dgu). S.G. Karmay in his "Origin and Early Development of the Tibetan Religious Traditions of the Great Perfection" has traced the development of this ninefold classification through a comparative study of the writings of Padmasambhava, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa and others. [17] The synthesis outlined in the Anuyoga text spyi-mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa and elaborated by the sMin-grol-gling tradition refers to the first three sequences (Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna and Bodhisattvayāna) under the heading "vehicles which control the cause of suffering" (kun-'byung 'dran-pa'i theg-pa). to the middle three (Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra and Yogatantra) as "vehicles of the outer tantras of austere awareness" (phyi dka'-thub rig-pa'i rgyud-kyi theg-pa). and to the last three (Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga) as "vehicles of overpowering means" (dbang-bsgyur thabs-kyi theg-pa).[18] According to Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, the enumeration of nine is itself provisional because the structure may be simplified, e.g. into the twofold classification of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, or extended, e.g. by adding the mundane Manusyayāna or Devayāna. Indeed, in this overview of the Buddhist path there may be as many vehicles as there are thoughts in the mind, while, from the resultant or absolute standpoint, there is said to be no vehicle at all.[19]

The following verses from the Laṅkāvatārasūtra (T. 107) are quoted in support of this position:[20]

As long as there are perceptions.
The culmination of the vehicles will never be reached.
When the mind becomes transformed
There is neither vehicle nor mover.

The integrated structure of the nine vehicles is also referred to in basic texts, such as the principle sems-sde tantra of the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po) system, the All-Accomplishing King (kun-byed rgyal-po'i rgyud. T. 828):[21]

Existentially there is only one.
But empirically there are nine vehicles.

The distinctions between the above mentioned nine sequences of the vehicle are discussed in the many philosophical treatises of the rNying-ma school which focus on spiritual and philosophical systems (siddhānta or grub-mtha'). e.g. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha' mdzod. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung, and bDud-'joms Rin-po-che, bstan-pa'i rnam-gzhag.[22] The most fundamental distinction is made between the first three or Būtra-based vehicles which advocate a causal approach to enlightenment (byang-chub) or buddha-hood (sangs-rgyas-nyid) and the last six or tantra-based vehicles which maintain the resultant view that buddha-hood is primordially or atemporally (ye-nas) attained, and realised as such by the removal of the obscurations covering enlightened mind (byang-chub sems).

The term "tantra" (rgyud) refers to three continue of meaning and four classes of texts forming the literary expression of that meaning. The former are the continuum of the ground (gzhi'i rgyud). of the path (lam-gyi rgyud)

and of the result ('bras-bu'i rgyud). which respectively indicate the abiding nature of reality (gnas-lugs), the means of realising it (thabs), and the culminating buddha-body (sku) and pristine cognition (ye-shes) resulting from that realisation. It is this structure of ground, path and result around which the tantra-texts, both rNying-ma and gSar-ma are developed, as we will see below with reference to the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra.[23] The four classes are the texts of Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra (or Caryātantra), Yogatantra and Anuttarayogatantra, which are differentiated and discussed at length in the above treatises.[24] The last of them, according to the rNying-ma school, comprises the texts of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga, the "vehicles of overpowering means" or three classes of Inner tantras (nang-rgyud sde-gsum)—which form the principal subject matter of the rNying-ma-pa commentarial tradition. It is important that the distinctions between these three are comprehended because, as we shall see, the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra has been interpreted from both Mahāyoga and Atiyoga perspectives.

When the three classes of inner tantras are contrasted. Mahāyoga is said to emphasise the ground of the Vajrayāna or resultant mode of Buddhist experience, i.e. the abiding nature of reality (gnas-lugs),[25] Anuyoga the path or skillful means of realisation and Atiyoga the result itself. the presence of buddha-body (sku) and pristine cognition (ye-shes). Alternatively, Mahāyoga focuses on the creation stage (bskyed-rim) of contemplation, Anuyoga on the perfection stage (rdzogs-rim). and Atiyoga on the Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen).

In the words of Me-nyags Khyung-grags, an eleventh-century holder of the rNying-ma lineage:[26]

Though the three aspects of creation and perfection[27] are present in them all, Mahāyoga emphatically teaches the creation stage, Anuyoga emphatically teaches the perfection stage, and the Great Perfection is effortless in both.

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, in his Mind at Rest (sems-nyid ngal-gso), adds:[28]

Mahāyoga emphasises vital energy and the skillful means of the creation stage.

Anuyoga emphasises the seed and discriminative awareness of the perfection stage.

Atiyoga emphasises the pristine cognition in which everything is without duality.

And according to sKyo-ston Śāk-ye of Gong-bu[29]:

Mahāyoga lays great emphasis on conduct,
Anuyoga lays great emphasis on contemplation.
And Atiyoga lays great emphasis on the view.

As these authors state, Mahāyoga does emphasise the ground in its perspective, the creation stage in its meditative technique and ritual

activities in its conduct, Anuyoga emphasises the path, the perfection stage of meditative technique and contemplation, and Atiyoga emphasises the result, the Great Perfection or the view itself. We shall observe however that tantra-texts such as the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra. despite their classification within Mahāyoga, necessarily contain elements of all three, and It is for this reason that divergent exegetical traditions later developed.[30]

The dispositions of those who would aspire to the three inner classes of tantra are also indicated in the Tantra of the Great Array (bkod-pa chen-po), which says:[31]

For one who would transcend the mind
There is the creative phase.
For one who would possess the essence of mind
There is the perfecting phase.
And for those who are supreme and most secret
There is the Great Perfection.

And by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in his Great Chariot (shing-rta chen-mo):[32]

The father tantras of Mahāyoga are the natural expression of the skillful means of appearance. intended on behalf of those requiring training who are mostly hostile and possessed by many ideas; the mother tantras of Anuyoga are the discriminative awareness of the perfection stage which is the reality of emptiness, intended for the benefit of those who are mostly desirous and delight In the tranquility of the mind; and the Atiyoga is revealed as the natural expression of their non-duality, intended for the benefit of those who are mostly deluded and who are energetic.

When these three classes are considered distinctly, each is analysed according to its essence, verbal definition and classification, as in the following account derived from Lo-chen Dharmaśrī's gsang-bdag zhal-lung. which represents the Tibetan bka'-ma tradition.[33]

Mahāyoga:

The essence of Mahāyoga is that liberation is obtained through union with the indivisible superior truth (lhag-pa'i gnyis-med bden-pa) by relying emphatically on the creation stage of skillful means (thabs-kyi bskyed-rim). The Sanskrit term mahāyoga is defined to mean "great union" of the mind with non-dual truth. The classification Includes the topics of empowerment (dbang-bskur) & entrance ('jug-pa). view (lta-ba). discipline (tshul-khrims), meditation (sgom), conduct (spyod-pa) and result ('bras-bu).

At the outset, four empowerments are conferred,[34] enabling Mahāyoga to be practised. The vehicle is then entered through three contemplations, namely: great emptiness (stong-ca chen-po) which purifies death, great compassion (snying-rje chen-po) which purifies the intermediate state after death (bar-do) and the seals and attainment of the maṇḍala-clusters (phyag-rgya-dang tshom-bu tshogs-sgrub) which purify the three phases of life by establishing one's true nature to be the maṇḍala

of deities.[35] The view of Mahāyoga holds ultimate truth (don-dam bden-pa) to be spontaneous awareness (rig-pa) without conceptual elaboration, relative truth (kun-rdzob bden-pa) to be the ideas or mental energy of that awareness which manifest as a maṇḍala of buddha-body and pristine cognition, and the superior indivisible truth to be the unity of these two—emptiness and pure appearance. Discipline refers to twenty-eight commitments (dam-tshig) upheld in relation to meditative practice, renunciation and attainment.[36] Meditation comprises the non-symbolic contemplation of ultimate reality and the symbolic meditations of the creation and perfection stages. In the creation stage, the maṇḍala is gradually visualised through the three contemplations, in which deity and thought are indivisible. In the perfection stage, visualisation concentrates on the energy channels, currents and seminal-points (rtsa-rlung thig-le) in the body—either in the "upper door" of one's own body (rang-lus steng-sgo) or the "lower door" (sexual centre) of one's partner's body (gzhan-lus 'og-sgo).[37] The conduct of Mahāyoga implies that defilements and conflicting emotions of saṃsāra, rites of "liberation" (sgrol) and sexual practices (sbyor) can be experienced without attachment because they are retained as skillful means.[38] The result indicates that the five buddha-bodies (sku-lnga)[39] are actualised in this life time or in the intermediate state after death.

Anuyoga:

The essence of Anuyoga is that by relying on the perfection stage of discriminative awareness (shes-rab rdzogs-rim), liberation is obtained through the unifying realisation of the expanse of reality (dbyings) and pristine cognition (ye-shes). without duality.[40] The Sanskrit term anuyoga is defined to mean "subsequent yoga", i.e., that which links Mahāyoga to Atiyoga or which reveals the path of desire (chags-lam) subsequent on discriminative awareness.[41]

As to the aforementioned six classificatory topics, Anuyoga has 36 basic and 831 ancillary empowerments which refer to all nine sequences of the vehicle, including the sūtras;[42] and it is entered through the spontaneously perfect non-duality of the expanse and pristine cognition. The view is that all phenomena are the primordial maṇḍala of Samantabhadri (ye ji-bzhin-pa'i dkyil-'khor), the uncreated awareness is the pristine cognition or spontaneously present maṇḍala of Samantabhadra (rang-bzhin lhun-grub-kyi dkyil-'khor), and the supreme bliss of their offspring is the fundamental maṇḍala of enlightened mind, without duality of expanse and pristine cognition (byang-chub sems-kyi dkyil-'khor).[43] Discipline refers to the nine enumerations of commitments described in the sixty-sixth chapter of the mdo dgonas-pa' dus-pa (NGB. Vol. 11).[44] Meditation comprises the path of skillful means (thabs-lam) which utilises the energy channels, currents and seminal points either with reference to one's own body or in union with a partner, and the path of liberation (grol-lam) which comprises the non-conceptual contemplation of reality and symbolic contemplation of the deities. who are said to appear instantly "in the manner of a fish leapins from the water." [45] In the result, the twenty-five resultant realities ('bras-bu chos nyer-lnga) of the buddha-level are actualised within one lifetime.[46]

Atiyoga:

The essence of Atiyoga or the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po) is that liberation occurs in primordial buddha-hood (ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa). without renunciation, acceptance, hope or doubt. The Sanskrit term atiyoga is defined to mean "highest union", because it is the culmination of all vehicles and of the creation & perfection stages. As to classification, the empowerment of the expressive power of awareness (rig-pa'i rtsal-dbang) is conferred,[47] the entrance is without activity, the view is that all things of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are primordial buddha-hood in the unique seminal point (thig-le nyag-gcig) or buddha-body of reality (chos-sku).[48] Discipline includes commitments of nothingness, apathy, uniqueness and spontaneous presence.[49] Meditation comprises the three classes- mental, spatial and esoteric instructional (sems-klong man-ngag-gi sde-gsum)—the last of which includes the celebrated techniques of Cutting Through Resistance (khregs-chod) and All-Surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal).[50] Conduct is without acceptance and rejection, and the result is that the goal is reached at the present moment on the level of spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra.[51]

The prime distinction between these three is therefore that Mahāyoga, the basis, cultivates the realisation of primordial buddha-hood in a gradual manner, Anuyoga does so in a spontaneous or perfect manner, and Atiyoga is the Great Perfection underlying both approaches—the goal itself.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the life and works of this gter-ston. see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, gter-ston brgya-rtsa'i rnam-thar rin-chen bai-durya'i phreng-mdzes, pp. 124a.3-124b.3, bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje, gangs-ljongs rgyal-bstan yongs-rdzogs-kyi phyi-mo snga-'gyur rdo-rje theg-pa'i bstan-pa rin-po-che ji-ltar byung-ba'i tshul dag-cing gsal-bar brjod-pa lha-dbang gYul-las rgyal-ba' i rnga-bo-che'i sgra-dbyangs. Ch. 6, pp. 588-589, and the edited translation of the latter contained in Dudjom Rinpoche, G. Dorje & M. Kapstein, *The Nyingma School Tibetan Buddhism; Its Fundamentals and History*. Book 2, Pt. 6. The most comprehensive edition of the Tibetan text of zhi-khro dgongs-pa rang-grol appears to be that published in 3 vols.: Delhi: Sherab Lama, 1975-1976. but refer also to RTD. vol. 4, pp. 1-281. The translations of the bar-do thos-grol are of course those by Kazi Dawa-Samdup, in W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. London/ Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1927; and by Francesca Freemantle and Chögyam Trungpa, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Berkeley/ London: Shambhala, 1975. See also Detlef Ingo Lauf, *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead*. Boulder/ London: Shambhala.

[2]:

On the early kings of Tibet, see E. Haarh, *The Yar-lun Dynasty and NSTB*, Book 2, Pt. 3. Precise dates for Smṛtijñānakīrti are unknown. According to bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rde, op. cit., pp. 452-3, he is held to have been either a previous emanation or teacher of Fong-zom-pa Chos-kyi bZang-po, whose floruit was in the eleventh century. As stated in R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, pp. 72-73, he was also a teacher of

'Brom-ston-pa. It appears, therefore, that very little time actually elapsed between Smṛtijñānakīrti and Lo-chen Rin-chen bZang-po.

[3]:

This edited translation, prepared in collaboration with Dr. Matthew Kapstein, contains two texts which were compiled by bDud-'joms Rin-po-che from older sources, viz. the aforementioned gangs-ljongs rgyal-bstan yongs-rdzogs-kyi phyi-snga-'gyur rdo-rje theg-pa'i bstan-pa rin-po-che ji-ltar byung-ba'i tshul dag-cing gsal-bar brjod-pa lha-dbang gYul-las rgyal-ba'i rnga-bo-che'i sgra-dbyangs [short title: rnying-ma'i chos-'byung], and the gsang-sngags snga-'gyur rnying-ma-ba 'i bstan-pa'i rnam-gzhag mdo-tsam brjod-pa legs-bshad snang-ba'i dga'-ston [short title: bstan-pa'i rnam-gzhag]. Henceforth the work will be referred to as NSTB. Note, however, that since the final pagination of the English version has not yet been determined, the given page references accord with the original Tibetan texts.

[4]:

Note that this designation "gSar-ma-pa" also applies to the bKa'-gdams-pa school. Here there is no connection with the lam-rim bla-brgyud of the dGe-lugs-pa. in which the dKa'-gdams-pa masters who preceded Tsong-kha-pa are referred to as the ancient ones (rnying-brgyud) when contrasted with his successors, the holders of the dGe-lugs-pa lineage, who are described by the term gsar-brgyud.

[5]:

Rong-zom-pa, dkon-mchog 'grel, as quoted in NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 7. PP. 723-726.

[6]:

The three ancestral rulers are the celebrated three religious kings of the royal dynasty, namely: Srong-btsan sGam-po who is revered as an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion; Khri-srong lDe-btsan who is revered as an emanation of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of discriminative awareness; and Khri Ral-pa-can. who in turn is revered as an emanation of Vajrapāṇi. the bodhisattva of power. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 3. pp. 151-169.

[7]:

The expression "high and low" (stod-smad) doctrinal centres refers respectively to those in Lhasa (the Jo-khang and Ra-mo-che) and near bSam-yas (the dPal bSam-yas Mi-'gyur Lhun-grub Lha-khang). the former being earlier and at a higher elevation than those around bSam-yas. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. p. 723.

[8]:

Extant translations prepared by each of these illustrious eighth and

ninth century figures in rGya-dkar sgra-'gyur gLing at bSam-yas and elsewhere are preserved in the bKa'-'gyur. bsTan-'gyur and rNying-ma rGyud-'bum. See NSTB, Book 2, Pts. 3-5. passim.

[9]:

The contributions of the last three figures to the transmission of the Guhyagarbha are outlined below, pp. 76-78. For more details, see NSTB, Book 2, Pts. 2-6; and also for information on the role of Śāntarakṣita in Tibet, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 3, pp. 154-166.

[10]:

mchan-nas bton-nas: Literally, drawn from the underarm pocket of the Tibetan garment.

[11]:

India, in this context, refers to the Magadha region alone. Refer also to Tāranātha, History of Buddhism in India. p. 332.

[12]:

The charge is commonly made by the rNying-ma-pa that those translations of Vajrayāna texts made during the earlier propagation and unaltered by the ninth century revisions read more lucidly in the Tibetan language than those which conformed to the strict conventions of lexical translation. don-' gyur. or translation of meaning, is here contrasted with sgra-'gyur. or translation of word. See below, pp. 61-62; also 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rgvud-'bum dris-lan. pp. 285-288.

[13]:

The standard seven-syllable verses of the Guhyagarbha are reproduced below in transliteration. Contrast the twenty-one syllable verses of the Kālacakratantra (T. 362), on which see J. Hopkins, The Kalachakra Tantra, and the Sanskrit edition: Kālacakra-Tantra and Other Texts. Ed. Dr. Raghu Vira and Dp. Lokesh Candra, Pt. 1.

[14]:

The conflict between Sa-skyā and 'Bri-gung developed out of a personal quarrel between Qubilai Qan. who exercised authority in Tibet through his association with Sa-skyā, and his elder brother Hülegü, who had founded the Ilkhan dynasty in Iran in 1258 and extended his own patronage to the 'Bri-gung-pa by 1267. The military campaign which began in 1285 led to the victory of Sa-skyā and the sacking of 'Bri-gung in 1290. See T.W.D. Shakabpa, Tibet; A Political History. P. 70, and R.A. Stein. Tibetan Civilization, pp. 78-79. The civil war waged between the dGe-lugs-pa hierarchy, with the military support of Guśrī Qan of the Qośot Mongols, and the Karma-pa with their patrons, the lords of gTsang, led to the enthronement of Dalai Lama V in Lhasa in 1641. See R.A. Stein, op. cit.. pp. 82-83.

[15]:

Karma-pa III Rang-byung rDo-rJe was a major lineage holder of the esoteric instructional class of the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po man-ngag-gi sde). See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4. PP. 236-238. gYung-ston rDo-rje dPal contributed greatly to the propagation of the bka'-ma lineage, and the Guhyagarbhatantra in particular, as we shall see below. Dalai Lama V is revered as one of the major discoverers of gter-ma, amounting to twenty-five volumes in his gsang-ba rgya-can. mKhyen-brtse and Kong-sprul, with Sa-skya and bKa'-brgyud affiliations respectively, were the architects of the ris-med or non-sectarian movement in nineteenth century Khams. Both were major holders of the rNying-ma lineages. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 658-693.

[16]:

There are countless incidents of this free exchange of ideas and instructions, and these were by no means confined to the aforementioned masters or to the ris-med activities in nineteenth century Khams, e.g., the relationship between Sa-skya and the Zur family of 'Ug-pa-lung, Sa-skya Pandita's association with the Yogin 'Dar-phyar-ba, or the role of 'Bri-gung Rin-chen Phun-tshogs and Zhva-dmar-pa IV in the bka'-ma lineage, to name but a few. Refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pts. 4-6, passim.

[17]:

S.G. Karmay, "Origin and Early Development of the Tibetan Religious Traditions of the Great Perfection", pp. 254-314.

[18]:

The basic Anuyoga text spyi-mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa. T. 829, is the subject of many commentaries by Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, 'dus-pa mdo-skor-gyi yig-cha. LCSB. vols. 10-12. NMKMG. vols. 14-16. The sMin-grol-gling monastery, founded by his brother gTer-bdag gLing-pa in 1659, quickly became the most influential centre for the study and development of rNying-ma philosophical ideas. Its branches covered Western and Eastern Tibet, and the treatises associated with this tradition have become the established authorities of the school. See below, pp. 102-105.

[19]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. pp. 17-19.

[20]:

Laṅkāvatārasūtra: Ch. 2. v. 202 a-d; Ch. 10, v. 458 a-d.

[21]:

kun-byed rgyal-po'i rgyud. T. 828. This verse is quoted by several authors, e.g.. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., p. 19: NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, p.

[22]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha' rin-po-che'i mdzod. Ed. Dodrup Chen Rinpoche. Gangtok, Sikkim, ca. 1969. Lochen Dharmaśrī, rgyud gsang-ba' i snyinz-po' i 'grel-chen gsang-bdag zhal-lung. NMKMG. Vol. 32. bDud-joma 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje, batan-pa' i rnam-gzhag. Kalimpong, 1966. See the edited English version of the latter contained in NSTB, Book 1.

[23]:

See below, pp. 59-61.

[24]:

See kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha' mdzod. pp. 257ff.; Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. pp. 59-83. and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 152ff.

[25]:

For a definition of this term, see H.V. Guenther, *Matrix of Mystery*. p. 229, n. 5. It also forms the title of a treatise by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa on the commitments associated with Atiyoga, the gnas-lugs rin-po-che'i mdzod. The definition of the term vajrayāna as the means of realising the fundamental unchanging buddha-nature is that given, for example, in NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 4, pp. 146a-b. Buddha-nature is described as a vajra in the sense that it is held to be undivided (mi-phyed) and imperishable (mi-shigs).

[26]:

Quoted In Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. p. 69.

[27]:

The three aspects of creation and perfection (bskyed-rdzogs-gsum) are the meditative techniques of the creation stage (bskyed-rim. Sanskrit utpattikrama). the perfection stage (rdzogs-rim. Sanskrit sampannakrama). and the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po. Sanskrit mahāsandhi). For the distinctions between these techniques, see below, pp. 23-27, and the appended commentary phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Chs. 11-13. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 156a ff.

[28]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, sems-nyid ngal-zso. Ch. 9. verses AVIII as translated by H.V. Guenther in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part One, p. 158.

[29]:

Quoted in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag zhal-lung*. p. 69.

[30]:

See below, pp. 123-127. Also refer to the structure of the Guhyagarbha's chapters, outlined on pp. 59-61, which clearly indicates that creation stage, perfection stage and Great Perfection are integrated in this tantra.

[31]:

This is a frequently cited quotation, e.g., in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag zhal-lung*. p. 70; NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 220b.

[32]:

Quoted in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag zhal-lung*. pp. 6970.

[33]:

The source for the entire section which follows is Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag zhal-lung*. pp. 70-83.

[34]:

On the four empowerments, see below, pp. 119-120. Also refer to the appended commentary *phyogs-bcu mun-sel*. Ch. 9, PP. 313-332 and Ch. 10 for a detailed explanation of their role in the Guhyagarbha.

[35]:

The three phases of life or birth (*skye-ba'i rim-gsum*) are respectively those from conception in the womb to the moment of birth (*mngal-du skye-ba bzung-pa-nas btsas-pa' i bar*). from the moment of birth to adult maturity (*btsas-nas nar-song-pa'i bar*). and from adult maturity to old age (*nar-song-nas rgan-po'i bar*). See NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 4, p. 159a.

[36]:

These twenty-eight commitments (*dam-tshig nyi-shu-rtsa-brgyad*) are outlined by *Lilāvajra*, *dam-tshig gsal-bkra*. P. 4744. pp. 147-8. They comprise three basic commitments of buddha-body, speech and mind (*sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rtsa-ba'i dam-tshig gsum*) and twenty-five ancillary ones: five of which are practised (*spyad-par bya-ba lnga*). namely five kinds of ritual concerning rites of "liberation" and sexual practices; five not to be renounced (*spang-par mi-bya-ba lnga*). namely the five conflicting emotions; five to be adopted (*blang-bar bya-ba lnga*). namely the five nectars; five to be known (*shes-par bya-ba lnga*). namely the components, elements, sense-objects, sacraments of meat, and the propensities in their pure nature; and five to be attained (*bsgrub-par bya-ba lnga*). namely. body, speech, mind, enlightened attributes and activities.

[37]:

A clear account of the distinctions between these practices is given in the appended commentary phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 13, pp. 453-463.

[38]:

These practices see described in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 11, PP. 386-402. Also see below, pp. 61-62 and note 103. For a biographical account of how the wrathful rites of "liberation" (sgrol) were practically applied, see the life of gNyags Jñānakumāra in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 281-289.

[39]:

The five buddha-bodies (sku-lnga) are those of reality (chos-sku. Sanskrit dharmakāya), perfect rapture (longs-spyod rdzogs-pa'i sku. Sanskrit sambhogakāya), emanation (sprul-pa'i sku. Sanskrit nirmāṇakāya), awakening (mngon-byang-gi sku, Sanskrit abhisambodhikāya), and indestructible reality (rdo-rje sku, Sanskrit vajrakāya). For the distinctions between these, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 41b-66b, especially 60a-63a.

[40]:

dbyings, the expanse of reality, represents the emptiness aspect (stong-cha) of the fundamental buddha-nature, while ye-shes. pristine cognition, represents the apparitional or mental aspect (snang-cha). See note 43 below. Also refer to NSTB, Book 1. Pt. ft, pp. 162b-163a.

[41]:

The integration of the sexual practices (sbyor) or path of desire (chags-lam) with discriminative awareness is a significant part of the perfection stage, according to Anuyoga. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha' mdzod. pp. 292-4, discusses the general integration of the four kind of desire ('dod-chazs tshul-bzhi) in the tantras. For Anuyoga in particular refer to NSTB, Book 1, Pt. ft, pp. 162b-166b.

[42]:

For an appraisal of these empowerments, refer to 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, shes-bya kun-khyab mdzod. Vol. 2, pp. 748-749, and for a discussion of the application of Anuyoga empowerments to all nine vehicles, including the sūtras, refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. PP. 758-764.

[43]:

The emptiness aspect of phenomena, represented by Samantabhadri, is united with the pure apparitional aspect of intelligence, represented by Samantabhadra, to produce the fundamental enlightened mind or buddha-nature. Refer to NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 162b ff. Also, see the present tantra-text. Ch. 2, and the appended commentary, phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 2, pp. 97.6 ff., which speak of Samantabhadri as bya-ba-mo, the objective

aspect of phenomena or reality, and Samantabhadra as byed-pa-po. the subjective aspect of Intelligence.

[44]:

mdo dgonz-pa 'dus-pa. P. 452, Vol. 9, Ch. 66, 190:3:3-192:3:4. These comprise four definitive commitments, twenty-eight common commitments, four superior commitments, twenty-three relating to discipline, twenty concerning attainment, four relating to continuity of the path of conduct, five Māras which are to be renounced, four enemies to be destroyed, and the commitment of the view. See 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, shes-bya kun-khyab mdzod. Vol. 2, pp. 182-192. Refer also to NSTB, glossary of enumerations, under their respective entries for an English version.

[45]:

The ability to visualise the deities instantly is associated with the perfection stage. It is contrasted with the gradually constructed visualisations of the creation stage. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 165a.

[46]:

These twenty-five realities of the buddha-level comprise: the five buddha-bodies (sku-lnga) which have been enumerated above; the five modes of buddha-speech (gsung-lnga). namely, uncreated meaning, intentional symbols, expressive words, speech of indestructible and Indivisible reality, and the speech which has the blessing of awareness; the five kinds of buddha-mind (thugs-lnga). namely the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, the mirrorlike pristine cognition, and those of sameness, discernment and accomplishment; the five enlightened attributes (yon-tan lnga). namely, pure buddha-fields, limitless celestial palaces, pure light-rays, thrones, and rapturous enjoyment; and the five enlightened activities (phrin-las lnga), namely, pacification of suffering and its causes, enrichment of excellent provisions, overpowering those who require training, wrathfully uprooting those who are difficult to train, and spontaneously accomplishing whatever emerges without effort. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 162a.

[47]:

On this empowerment and its aspects, through which the Great Perfection is entered, see kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha'i mdzod. pp. 370-372. For the Indian historical background refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 130-137.

[48]:

The term thig-le (Sanskrit bindu), rendered here as seminal point, in this context refers to the seed or nucleus of enlightened mind. The term also indicates the white and red seminal fluids within the physical body and the subtle seminal points of light which appear internally and before the eyes during the practice of All-Surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal).

Sanskrit vyutkrāntaka). See NSTB, glossary.

[49]:

I.e. med-pa, phyal-ba, gcig-pa, and lhun-grub. For a detailed explanation of these commitments according to the Great Perfection, see kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, gnas-lugs mdzod. passim: and H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery. p. 238. The terms nothingness and apathy are, of course, unrelated to their usage in mundane doctrines.

[50]:

On these classes and meditative techniques of the Great Perfection, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 190a.5-211b; and for their respective lineages, ibid.. Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 120-143. Pt. 4, pp. 187-277.

[51]:

This refers to the sixteenth buddha-level, otherwise known as ye-shes bla-ma. on which see the appended commentary phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 12, p. 430. The celebrated commentary by 'Jigs-med gLing-pa on rdzogs-chen meditation, khrid-yig ye-shes bla-ma, is named after this highest of buddha-levels.

2. Compilation of the Kangyur and Nyingma Tantras
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[Full title: Compilation of the bKa'-gyur rNying-rgyud and the rNying-ma rgyud-'bum]

Each of these three inner classes is represented in the compilations of tantra-texts—the bKa'-gyur and the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa (rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum). The former Includes a rNying-rGyud section (T. 828-844) which may have, as Ngag-gi dBang-po claims, been inserted during the 14th. century by dBus-pa bLo-gsal Sangs-rgyas 'Bum.[1] Therein the principal texts representing each of these categories are contained—the Tantra of the All-Accomplishine King (kun-byed rgyal-po. t. 828) which exemplifies the Mental Class (sems-sde) of Atiyoga, the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (mdo-dgongs-pa 'dus-pa. T. 829) and its root the All-Gathering Awareness (kun-'dus rig-pa. T. 831) along with the Flash of Splendour (ye-shes rngam-glog, T. 830) which represent Anuyoga, and a series of tantras belonging to the Mahāyoga class, viz. T. 832-844, on which see below, pp. 32-61.

Owing to the secrecy of the rNying-ma tantras. which had been recognised in the early ninth century when the lDan-dkar-ma.[2] Catalogue was compiled. and in consequence of the controversy surrounding them in the eleventh century writings of Lha bLa-ma Ye-shes-'od and 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas,[3] these texts were, with few exceptions. not included in the bKa'-gyur. which was devised chiefly as a

compilation of later or new translations:

The sgra-sbyor bam-gnyis in fact says:[4]

Because of their great strictness the inner tantras of the secret mantras are not here set forth.

Certain key texts representative of the rNying-ma tantras were, as we have already seen, inserted in the bKa'-gyur at an early date, and the Peking edition of the bsTan-gyur (vols. 82-83) contains a substantial number of treatises on these tantras. Through the determined efforts of the Zur family, the bulk of the rNying-ma tantras were stored at 'Ug-pa-lung in gTsang, which was the main centre of rNying-ma activity in Central Tibet from the era of Zur-po-che (late tenth/ early eleventh century) until the fourteenth century.[5] Zur bZang-po dPal utilised the material resources, which he had obtained in the form of commissions and gifts from the Mongol emperor Buyantu (r. 1311-1320), to prepare printing-blocks for twenty-eight doctrinal collections of the ancient translations which were preserved at 'Ug-pa-lung, including the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra (T. 832), and its celebrated commentary by Līlāvajra,[6] the so-called sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā. P. 4718). He printed a thousand copies of each and distributed them to students.[7] Nonetheless, until the fifteenth century, the continuous lineages of these rNying-ma tantras were exceedingly few.

The various transmissions of these tantras then converged in the treasure-finder Ratna gLing-pa (1403-1471), a native of Gru-shul in Lho-brag. He persevered to collect texts from all quarters, including the abbreviated set of the Collected Tantras (rgyud-'bum) which was preserved at 'Ug-pa-lung, and he received, with great difficulty, their complete transmission from the aged Mes-sgom bSam-gtan bZang-po of gTsang, who alone held the continuous lineage.[8] Later, Ratna gLing-pa compiled the Collected Tantras at Lhun-grub Palace in Gru-shul, and had new copies prepared, the earlier ones in ink, and the later ones in gold. He transmitted them many times to ensure their continuity.

The lineage was maintained by his elder son, Tshe-dbang Grags-pa, continuing down to the present in the following succession:[9]

Tshe-dbang Grags-pa (elder son);
Ngag-dbang Grags-pa (younger son);
Ngag-dbang Nor-bu (grandson);
Nor-bu Yongs-grags;
rGyal-sras Nor-bu dBang-rgyal;
Pad-gling gSung-sprul III. Tshul-khrims rDo-rje;
Gar-dbang Tshul-khrims rGyal-mtshan of Bon-lung;
Pad-gling Thugs-sras IV, bsTan-'dzin Gyur-med rDo-rje;
Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gLing-pa of sMin-grol-gling;
Pad-gling gSung-sprul IV, Ngag-dbang Kun-bzang rDo-rje;
Pad-gling thugs-sras V, 'Gyur-med mChog-grub dPal-'bar;
Pad-ma Don-grub Grags-pa;
Pad-gling gSung-sprul VI, Kun-bzang bsTan-pa'i rGyal-mtshan;

rBa-kha Kun-bzang Rig-'dzin rDo-rje;
Pad-gling gSung-sprul VIII, Kun-bzang bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma;
rBa-kha Rig-'dzin Khams-gsum Yong-grol;
O-rgyan Nam-grol rGya-mtsho;
bGe-'dun rGya-mtsho;
bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje.

Other Figures Connected with the Collected Tantras:
Gong-ra Lo-chen gZhan-phan rDo-rJe (1594-1654):[10]

Gong-ra Lo-chen was a student of Pad-gling gSung-sprul III Tshul-khrims rDo-rJe and mKhas-grub bLo-gros rgyal-mtshan and a teacher of gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub. He prepared copies of the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa (rnying-ma rgyud-'bum) on three occasions, and on two of them, in consideration of the continuity of the teaching, he sent those copies to Kham and Kong-po, so that his transmission penetrated both Kham and Central Tibet.

Rig-'dzin 'Jigs-med gLing-pa:[11]

'Jigs-med gLing-pa (1730-1798), a native of 'Phyong-rgyas and student of dPal-ri monastery, is celebrated for his revelations of the Innermost Spirituality of kLong-chen-pa (klong-chen snying-thig). During the eighteenth century when, in consequence of the incursions by Dzun-gar-pa Mongols, the rNying-ma monastic centres of rDo-rje Brag and sMin-grol-gling had been severely damaged,[12] he made copies of all the tantras of the rNying-ma-pa tradition which were to be found at sMin-grol-gling, some twenty-five volumes, and had the first five pages of each volume written in ink made of the five precious substances,[13] and the remainder in black ink on a white background (skya-chos). He was the first to prepare a detailed catalogue and history of this collection, entitled the Narrative History of the Precious Collected Tantras of the Ancient Translation School: the Ornament Covering All Jambudvīpa (snga-'gyur rgyud-'bum rin-po-che'i rtogs-pa brjod-pa 'dzam-gling tha-grur khyab-pa'i rgyan). All later compilers have relied on this catalogue which is included in the nine volumes of his collected works.[14]

'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub:

'Jigs-med gLing-pa's new redaction of the Collected Tantras was subsequently carved on wood-blocks under the patronage of Queen Ga-je-bza' Tshe-dbang Lha-mo of sDe-dge.[15] In 1797, the Kah-thog dGe-brtse Paṇḍita 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub, a student of 'Jigs-med gLing-pa's main disciple and lineage-holder rDo-grub I. 'Jigs-med Phrin-las 'Od-zer,[16] prepared an index for the sDe-dge xylograph edition, entitled, bde-bar gshegs-pa'i sde-snod rdo-rje theg-pa snga-'gyur rgyud-'bum rin-po-che'i rtogs-pa brjod-pa lha'i rnga-bo-che lta-bu'i gtam.[17]

There is an extant manuscript of the rGyud 'Bum. pertaining to the afore-mentioned sDe-dge edition, in 30 volumes (originally 33 vols.), twenty-nine of which are housed in the India Office Library in London (Waddell Collection, 1904-5), and the other (vol. 1) in the Bodleian. Copies of the celebrated sDe-dge xylograph and catalogue are also to be found outside Tibet,[18] and a new reprint of the Collected Tantras was prepared In 1973 under the patronage of Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche based

on a manuscript preserved at gTing-skyes dGon-pa byang.[19] This reprint comprises thirty-six volumes, of which vole. 1-10 include the tantra-texts of Atiyoga, vols. 11-13 Include the sūtra and tantra-texts of Anuyoga and vols. 14-33 include the texts of Mahāyoga. Volume 34 contains 'Jigs-med gLing-pa's catalogue, while volumes 35-36 contain the index of 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub. A modern catalogue to this edition of the Collected Tantras by Eiichi Kaneko has been published in Japan.[20]

In addition, there are other extant compilations of the rNying-ma tantras some of which correspond to sections of NGB., e.g. the rnying-ma'i rgyud bcu-bdun. and others which contain considerable variations. e.g., the The Rgyud-'bum of Vairocana and the Bhutanese Mtshams-brag manuscripts.[21]

At this juncture, an advanced study of the literature contained in vols. 1-13 would make a definitive contribution to our knowledge of Atiyoga and Anuyoga. The present research, however, will focus on the texts of Mahāyoga, since it is within the Mahāyoga category of the 'Gyud-'bum that the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra cycle is to be found, despite the connection with Atiyoga which has been drawn by some later Tibetan commentators.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

S.G. Karmay in his "Origin and Early Development of the Tibetan Religious Traditions of the Great Perfection", p. 276, has brought to our attention this claim made by Ngag-gi dBang-po in the rgol-ngan log-rtog bzlog-pa'i bstan-bcos. Even if the assertion were true, the inclusion of these texts would have coincided with the floruit of Buston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364) who helped compile the bKa'-'gyur in its later form.

[2]:

The bKa'-'gyur dKar-chag lDan-dkar-ma (T. 4364), compiled by sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and Nam-mkha'i sNying-po during the ninth century, is a catalogue of those texts which could be widely disseminated. See M. Lalou, "Les Textes Bouddiques au temps du Rol Khri-sron-lde-bcan." The same translators, who had been involved in the translation of texts relating to the three inner classes of tantra, were advised to employ the utmost secrecy with respect to these highest and most potent of instructions. Consequently these texts were neither revised nor catalogued. See 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rgyud-'bum dris-lan. pp. 285-288. Indeed, the lineages associated with the three classes of tantra were not widely propagated before the late eleventh century in sGro-phug-pa's time. See also NSTB, Book 2. Pt. 5, p. 360 ff.

[3]:

The polemics of Lha-bla-ma Ye-shes 'od and the prince of Gu-ge, Pho-brang Zhl-ba-'od, have been discussed by s.G. Karmay, "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od"; "An Open Letter by Pho-brane Zhi-ba-'od to the Buddhists of Tibet"; "A Discussion on the Doctrinal Position of rDzogs-chen

from the 10th to the 13th Centuries"; and R.A. Stein, Tibetan Civilization, pp. 71-72. On their objections to the practice of sbyor-sgrol and on the 'byams-yig of 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas, see also below, pp. 61-72.

[4]:

sgra-sbyor bam-gnyis, T. 4347, pp. 6-7. Ed. Sonam Angdu, in Tibeto-Sanskrit Lexicographical Materials.

[5]:

On the founding and development of 'Ug-pa-lung, and for the biographies of the Zur family which maintained the bka'-ma lineage through to the seventeenth century, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 304-429. On the location of this monastery near gZhis-ka-rtse and of the retreat centre of the Zurs in the Shangs valley, see A. Ferrari, mK'yen brtse's Guide to the holy places at Central Tibet. pp. 60, 66, 144, 159.

[6]:

The conventional rendering of Līlāvajra has been challenged by R.M. Davidson, "The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī," p. 6, n. 18, where he argues that Vilāsavajra is the correct Sanskrit name.

[7]:

On the activities of Zur bZang-po dPal, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 400-405.

[8]:

The story of Ratna zLing-pa's successful salvage of the Collected Tantras In gTsang is recounted in 'Jam-mgon Kons-sprul, gter-ston breva-brtaa. pp. 127a.3-128b.1, and in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 580-583. According to tradition, the act of obtaining the books would have been meaningless if he had not managed to receive the spiritual transmission connected with them from Mes-sgom.

[9]:

Refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 501-502 for this lineage.

[10]:

Refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP. 483-486.

[11]:

Refer to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 636-646; also S.D. Goodman, "Rig-'dzin 'Jigs-med gLing-pa and the Klong-Chen sNying-Thig."

[12]:

In 1717 the Dzungar Mongols occupied Lhasa and killed Lha-bzang Qan, the Qośot leader who had previously murdered the regent Sangye Gyamtso and helped the Chinese to remove the Dalai Lama VI in 1706. A great persecution of rNying-ma-pa monasteries followed, resulting in the deaths of Lochen Dharmaśrī, Rig-'dzin bZhi-pa Padma Phrin-las of rDo-rje Brag, and others. See L. Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth century*.

[13]:

The five precious substances (rin-chen sna lnga) are sold, silver, turquoise, coral and pearl.

[14]:

The catalogue is included in NGB. Vol. 34, no. 407, and in JLSB. Vol. 3.

[15]:

It was largely through the efforts of 'Jigs-med gLing-pa's student. rDo-grub I. 'Jigs-med Phrin-las 'Od-zer (1743-1821) that the Queen of sDe-dge offered royal patronage to the rNying-ma tradition and sponsored the carving of the woodblocks. This alignment of the Queen with her preceptor. rDo-grub Rin-po-che, led to the 1798 sDe-dge civil war. after which both of them were exiled. See E.G. Smith. *Introduction to Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia*. PP. 23-24.

[16]:

On rDo-grub I, Phrin-las 'Od-zer, see Tulku Thondup. *The Tantric Tradition the Nyingmapa*, pp. 88-93.

[17]:

This index is contained in NGB. Vols. 36-36. Regarding this figure's other composition on the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra. see below, p. 105.

[18]:

The sDe-dge xylograph edition in 25 volumes plus catalogue is preserved in Rome and elsewhere. See J. Driver, "A Preliminary Survey of the Tantras of the Old School", unpublished ms.

[19]:

rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum. Vols 1-36: Thimphu: Ngodrup, 1973-75.

[20]:

Eiichi Kaneko. *Ko-Tantora zenshû kaidai mokuroku*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1982.

The publication details of these alternative collections are as follows:
 Rnin ma'i rgyud bcu bdun. 3 vols. New Delhi: Sande Dorje, 1973-1977. I-Tib 73-906438. The Rgyud-'bum of Vairocana. 8 vols. SSS. 16-23 (1971). I-Tib 70924557. The Mtshams-brag manuscript. 46 vols. 1982. Thimphu. Bhutan. National Library. Royal Government of Bhutan. Bhu-Tib 82-902165-

3. The texts of Mahāyoga

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The texts of Mahāyoga are divided into two classes—tantras (rgyud-sde / tantravarga) and means for attainment (sgrub-gde / sādhanavarga). The former (NGB. vols. 14-19) comprise the exoteric corpus of literature from which the latter (NGB. vols. 20-33), the esoteric practices, are drawn.[1] Volumes 31-32 also respectively contain the general tantras (spyi-rgyud) and the particular tantras (sgos-rgyud) associated with the original gter-ma recension of the sgrub-chen bka'-brgyad dba'-dus-kyi rgyud. from which the later gter-ma cycles of the Eight Transmitted Precepts (bka'-brgyed) derive.[2]

The means for attainment have five main sections, corresponding[3] to the five supramundane meditational deities, viz. Yamāntaka ('jam-dpal gzhin-rje gshad-pa'i rgyud-skor. NGB. vols. 20-22, T. 838), Hayagrīva/Āśvottama (dgal rta-mgrin padma dbang-chen rta-mchog rol-pa'i rgyud-sde-rnams. NGB. vols. 23-24). Śriheruka (dpal yang-dag thugs-kyi rgyud-sde-rnams. NGB. vol. 25), Vajrāmṛta ('chi-med bdud-rtsi yon-tan-gyi rgyud-sde-rnams. NGB. vol. 26, T. 841), and Vajrakīla/Vajrakumāra (bcom-ldan-'das dgal rdo-rje phur-pa'i rgyud-sde rnams. NGB. vols. 27-29). The following three mundane meditational deities are also included: Mātari (ma-mo srid-pa'i dzong lung chen-mo yum bzung-ma'i dngos-grub chen-mo'i rgyud-rnams-dang ma-mo rtsa-rgyud 'bum-tig-gi skor. ngb. vols. 30-31, Vol. 33, T. 842), Lokastotrapūja/ mChod-bstod (NGB. vol. 32, T. 844), and Vajramantrabhīru/ Drag-sngags (NGB. vol. 32. T. 843).

The class of tantras is otherwise known as the eighteen tantrapīṭakas of Mahāyoga, a basic cycle of texts traditionally held to have been subdivided from the Hundred Thousand Verses of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul stong-phrag brgya-pa) by Kukkurāja, on whom see below, pp. 74-75. Different enumerations of these tantrapīṭakas have been recorded in the works of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, dPa'-bo gTsong-lag Phreng-ba, gTer-bdag gLing-pa, Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab Padma rNam-rgyal and others.

In the sngags-kyi spyi-don tshangs-dbyangs 'brug-sgra, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa classifies the eighteen according to buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, activities, and generality as follows:[4]

sku'i sku-rgyud glang-po rab-'bog;
 sku'i gsung-rgyud glang-po chur-'jug;

sku'i thugs-rgyud sangs-rgyas mnyam—sbyor;
 gsung-gi sku-rgyud ri-bo brtsegs-pa;
 gsung-gi gsung-rgyud padma dbang-chen;
 gsung-gi thugs-rgyud zla-gsang thig-le;
 thugs-kyi sku-rgyud rtse-mo 'dus-pa;
 thugs-kyi gsung-rgyud gcig-las 'phros-pa;
 thugs-kyi thugs-rgyud gsang-ba 'dus-pa;
 yon-tan-gyi sku-rgyud sgron-me 'bar-ba;
 yon-tan-gyi gsung-rgyud bdud-rtai samaya 'bum-sde;
 yon-tan-gyi thugs-rgyud dpal-mchog dang-po;
 phrin-las-kyi sku-rgyud dpal-phreng dkar-po;
 phrin-las-kyi gsung-rgyud ma-mo rgyud-lung;
 phrin-las-kyi thugs-rgyud bidyotamala 'bum-sde;
 spyi'i sku-pgyud thabs-zhags;
 spyi'i gsung-rgyud dam-tshig bkod-oa;
 spyi'i thugs-rgyud gsang ha sgyu-'phrul.

dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston, enumerates the eighteen differently, but with the same basic sixfold classification;[5]

sangs-rgyas mnyam-sbyor glang-chen rab-'bog glang-chen mtshor-
 zhugs-te sku'i rgyud gsum;
 zla-gsang thig-le gcig-las 'phro-pa du-ma 'phro-pa-ste gsung-gi rgyud
 gsum;
 gsang-ba 'dus-pa ri-bo brtsegs-pa rtse-gcig 'dus-pa-ste thugs-kyi rgyud
 gaum;
 dpal-mchog dang-po bdud-rtsi mchog dang-po yid-bzhin nor-bu'i rgyud-
 ste yon-tan-gyi rgyud gsum;
 karma ma-la sgron-ma 'bar-ba kilaya yig-'bru bcu-gnyis-ta phrin-las-kyi
 rgyud gsum;
 sgyu-'phrul dra-ba dam-tshig bkod-pa thabs-kyi zhags-pa-ste spyi'i
 rgyud gsum.

The enumeration which gained acceptance from the time of gTer-bdag
 gLing-pa onwards[6] and which corresponds to the structure of the
 Collected Tantras the rNying-ma-pa, is that given by Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab
 Padma rNam-rgyal, sgrub-brgyud shing-rta brgyad-kyi byung-ba brjod-pa'i
 gtam mdor-bsdus legs-bshad padma dkar-po'i rdzings-bu, and inferred by
 bDud-'joms Rin-po-che, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism; Its
 Fundamentals and History:[7]

The five great tantras of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and
 activities are respectively Buddhasamāyoga (NGB. vol. 16, T. 366-7).
 Candraguhyatilaka (NGB. vol. 16, T. 477). Guhyasamāja (NGB. vol. 17. T.
 442-3). Śrīparamādyā (NGB. vol. 17. T. 487). and Karmamāle
 [Karmamāle] (NGB. vol. 17); the five tantras concerned with means for
 attainment are heruka rol-pa (NGB. vol. 18, T. 840), rta-mchog rol-pa
 (NGB. vol. 18, T. 839), snying-rje rol-pa (NGB. vol. 18, T. 840), bdud
 rtsi-rol-pa (NGB. vol. 18), and phur-pa chu-gnyis-pa (NGB. vol. 19); The five
 tantras concerned with conduct are ri-bo brtsegs-pa (NGB. vol. 6), ye-shes
 rngam-glog (NGB. vol. 12, T. 830), dam-tshig bkod-pa (NGB. vol. 12),
 ting-'dzin rtse-gcig (NGB. vol. 8), and glang-chen rab-'bog (NGB. vol. 19);
 the two supplementary tantras are rnam-srang sgyu-'phrul drya-ba (NGB.

vol. 19, T. 466) and thabs-kyi zhags-pa (NGB. vol. 19. T. 835); and the single tantra which summarises all the others is Guhyagarbha (NGB. vols. 14-16, T. 832-837).

All these systems of enumeration in common give precedence to the Guhyagarbhatantra and its cycle of texts, known as the Magical Net (Māyājāla/ sgyu-'phrul). whether it is classified as the general tantra (spyi-rgyud). the general tantra among general tantras (spyi-'i spyi-rgyud). or the single tantra which summarises all the others (thams-cad-kyi bsdus-don lta-bu'i rgyud-sde gcig). This is Indeed suggested in the name of the basic tantra from which the eighteen were reputedly subdivided.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The distinction between the esoteric sādhanā class and the exoteric tantra class is emphasised by the account of Zur-po-che's construction of 'Ug-pa-lung monastery. See below, pp. 90-91

[2]:

This is the Tantra of the Gathering at the Eight Transmitted Precepts, which Padmasambhava Introduced into Tibet. It was subsequently revealed in the context of many Important gter-ma cycles, such as Nyangral Nyi-ma 'Od-zer's bka'-brgyad bde-gshegs bder-'dus (RTD. Vol. 21), Guru Chos-dbang's bka'-brgyad gsang-ba yongs-rdzogs (RTD. Vols. 22-23). Padma gLing-pa's bka'-brgyad thugs-kyi me-long (RTD. Vol. 23), and mChog-gyur bDe-chen gling-pa's bka'-brgyad bde-gshegs kun-'dus (RTD. Vol. 25)

[3]:

The meditational deities (yi-dam) Yamāntaka, Hayagrīva, Śrīheruka, Vajrāmṛta, and Vajrakumāra are said to be supramundane in the sense that they confer supreme accomplishments (mchog-gi dngos-grub) of enlightenment and buddha-hood. They are contrasted with the three mundane meditational deities—Mātari, Stotrapūja, and Vajramantrabhīru—who confer common accomplishments (thun-mong-gi dngos-grub). On the Indian historical background to these practices, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 103-112. On their structure, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 162.

[4]:

Ed. Tārthans Tulku. Varanasi. 1968, pp. 27-28. The text is also published in vol. 4 of Dodrup Chen Rinpoche's edition of ngal-gso skor-gsum. For an earlier Yogatantra tradition of eighteen tantras which resembles this in a few cases, see Amoghavajra's Memorandum on the Vajrasāekhātantra. Taisho, 869 (vol. 18).

[5]:

Ed. Lokesh Chandra, Delhi, p. 238. There exists another Delhi edition: Delhi Karmapae Chodey Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang, 1980.

[6]:

On the life and works of gTer-bdag gLing-pa. the founder of the sMin-grol-gling (1646-1714) tradition which penetrated Khams and Western Tibet from its stronghold in Lho-kha and became the dominant rNying-ma school during the nineteenth century, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 620-636. 'Jigs-med gLing-pa in his rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum-gyi rtogs-brjod. p. 117. however follows the earlier enumeration of dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba.

[7]:

The first of these texts is contained in the zhe-chen rgyal-tshab-kyi gsung-'bum. vol. 2. Paro: Ngodrup. 1975 onwards. The second reference is to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 83.

4a. The Māyājāla Cycle (Introduction)

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The Māyājāla cycle of texts to which the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra belongs comprises both an eightfold and a fourfold division. This most significant cycle of the rNying-ma-pa oral tradition has until recently been ignored by western scholars, yet it would merit the attention given to the Prajñāpāramitā literature by E. Conze and others.[1] Early historical and literary references to specific texts connected with the Māyājāla cycle are found in the Tun Huang manuscripts, as well as in the writings of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes and Rong-zom Chos-kyi bZang-po, as S.G. Karmay has Indicated.[2] Among gNubs-chen's compositions there is reported to have been a Commentary on the Realisation of the Eighty Chapter Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul brgyad-cu-pa'i mngon-rtogs 'grel) which no longer survives.[3] The various recensions of the Injunctions Padmasambhava (padma'i bka'-thang) provide what are perhaps the earliest specific references to the eightfold and fourfold divisions.

The Injunctions Padmasambhava Discovered At Crystal Rock (padma bka'-thang shel-brag-ma), an extant gter-ma source attributed to Yar-rje o-rgyan gLing-pa (1323-c. 1360) contains the following statement:[4]

rnam-snang la-sogs sgyu-'phrul sde-bzhi-dang
gsang-ba rdor-sems sgyu-'phrul sde-tshan brgyad |

The same text additionally asserts that Padmasambhava himself drew up the eightfold division of the Māyājāla cycle with the translators sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and lCo-gro kLu'i rGyal-mtshan.[5]

Sangs-rgyas gLing-pa (1340-1396) in his bka'-thanz gser-phreng, provides the following complete enumeration of the eight-fold division of the Magical Net, indicating the emphasis of each text:[6]

1. sems-dang ye-shes rang-la bstan-pa'i rgyud sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje gsang-ba:

2. phrin-las kha-tshar ston-pa'i rgyud sgyu-'phrul bzhi-bcu-pa:

3. dbang-gi nzo-bo mngon-du gyur-pa'i phyir sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje bla-ma'i rgyud;

4. dam-tshig-dang lta-ba'i man-ngag ston-pa sgyu-'phrul le-lag don-bdsus-kyi rgyud;

5. rgyud-kyi lde-mig-tu gyur-pa'i rgyud sgyu-'phrul le'u brgyad-pa;

6. rol-pa mngon-du gyur-par bya-ba'i phyir lha-mo sgyu-'phrul-gyi rgyud:

7. de-rnams-kyi ma-tshang-ba kha-skong-ba'i rgyud sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa;

8. don-dam ye-shes chen-po bahad-pa 'jam-dpal sgyu-'phrul drya-ba'i rgyud.

This significantly, is the enumeration of the sgyu-'phrul brgyad to have been accepted by later historians and commentators, such as dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba (1504-1566), Sog-bzlog-pa bLo-gros rGyal-mtshan (1552-1624), and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717).

dPa'-bo, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston, describes these eight primary texts In the following terms:[7]

1. thams-cad rang-snang-du ston-pa rtsa-rgyud gsang-ba'i snying-no:

2. rol-pa mngon-par brJod-pa lha-mo sgyu-'phrul:

3. dkyil-'khor ston-pa sgyu-'phrul brgyad-pa:

4. phrin-las ston-pa sgyu-'phrul bzhi-bcu-pa:

5. dbang gtso-bor ston-pa sgyu-'phrul bla-ma:

6. yon-tan mthar-phyin-par ston-pa sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa:

7. sde-snod yongs-la khyab-par ston-pa sgyu-'phrul dra-ba chen-po:

8. dam-tshjg gtso-bor ston-pa sgyu-'phrul le-lag.

The same author also provides a set of four exegetical tantras (bshad-rgyud), which do not correspond to the so-called sgyu-'phrul sde-bzhi, namely:[8]

1. grol-lam rim-gyig ston-pa ye-shes snying-po:

2. cig-char ston-ra rdo-rje me-long:
3. thabs-lam rim-gyis ston-pa rdo-rje thal-ba:
4. cig-char ston-pa rdo-rje rgya-mtsho.

The standard enumeration of the sgyu-'phrul sde-bzhi is that given by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in the following passage from his phyogs-bcu mun-sel, and already implied in the writings of Yar-rje O-rgyan gLing-pa: [9]

This (cycle of the Magical Net) also comprises four sections, namely, the Magical Net of Vajrasattva which reveals all things of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to be self-manifesting and Indivisible; the Magical Net of Vairocana (T. 466, NGB. Vol. 19) which extensively reveals the ritual activity and feast-offerings; the Magical Net the Goddess (T. 836, NGB. Vol. 15) which actually reveals the display of reality; and the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (T. 360, NGB. Vol. 15) which all-pervasively reveals the vehicle.

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa additionally claims that the sgyu-'phrul sde-brgyad is a sub-classification of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva, providing us with a different enumeration:[10]

The Magical Net of Vajrasattva itself comprises eight sections, namely, the glorious Secret Nucleus (T. 832, NGB. Vol. 14) which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be manifest in and of themselves; the Forty-Chapter Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which perfectly reveals enlightened activity; the Eight-Chapter Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which perfectly reveals the maṇḍala; the Superior Magical Net (T. 837, NGB. Vol. 14) which clearly reveals the empowerments; the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which reveals the commitments as supreme; the Eighty-Chapter Magical Net (T. 834, NGB. Vol. 14) which extensively reveals enlightened attributes; the Mirror Indestructible Reality (T. 833, NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the deities' body-colours and symbolic hand-implements; the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the creation stage; and the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the path of skillful means.

Of the texts Included in the eightfold division by Sangs-rgyas gLing-pa, and later by dPa'-bo gTsong-lag 'Phreng-ba, Sog-bzlog-pa and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa assigns the lha-mo sgyu-'phrul and the 'jam-dpal sgyu-'phrul to the sde-bzhi, substituting for them three exegetical tantras—rdo-rje me-long, sgyu-'phrul rgya-mtsho, and sgyu-'phrul thal-ba.

[Tantra-texts of the Māyājāla cycle]

[Table Comparing the Chapters of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra]

Among them the present study concerns the Great Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real (gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-

na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud chen-po / Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra. T. 832, NGB. vol. 14, pp. 1-61), which is considered to be the basic text of the cycle.

Long-chen Rab-'byams-pa speaks of it in his phyogs-bcu mun-sel as:
[11]

... this kingly and glorious Tantra Of The Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect the Real (T. 832)—the furthest summit of all vehicles, the source of all literary transmissions, the great short-cut of the vehicle of all buddhas of the three times, and the most secret of all.

And 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal in his spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po elaborates:[12]

It is known from literary sources that “tantras are to be known in comparison with other tantras”. Accordingly, this great tantra which completely discloses the essentials of view and meditation according to the unsurpassed mantras is a unique gemstone of the three worlds inasmuch as it qualitatively establishes the Intention and meaning of the entire vehicle of indestructible reality. It is the king of all tantras. It is the furthest summit of all vehicles, the source of all teachings. the general commentary on all literary transmissions. the great short-cut of all buddhas, and it is endowed with the wondrous enlightened attributes of greatness which are the genuine innermost intention of all the Tathāgatas. There is therefore no essential point which appears to be taught outside this tantra. Knowing that those texts which have been rashly composed. giving instruction on each profound and minute verse of indestructible reality In the mantra- and tantra-texts as a desirable object of sophistry to satisfy the prowess of one's own intellect, are vacant as a lifeless corpse. It Is appropriate that fortunate beings who possess the supreme aspiration of the vehicle of indestructible reality should earnestly attend to the exposition of such tantras. even at the cost of their own bodies or of life itself!

The rNying-ma tradition therefore regards this text as its fundamental tantra. whether it is interpreted as mainstream Mahāyoga or as an Atiyoga source.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

H.V. Guenther's study. Matrix of Mystery. is the first western work to draw heavily on the Guhyagarbhatantra. Among E. Conze's works. one might note The Large Sutra on Perfect Windom. The Perfection Wisdom In Eight Thousand Lines And its Verse Summary, and Materials for a Dictionary of true Prajñāpāramitā Literature. See also L. Lancaster. PRS.

[2]:

S.G.Karmay, op. cit., p. 234, notes references in Macdonald and Imaeda. Pl. 48-52: Pl 59-61. to the effect that Pelliot PT. 42, Pts. 1, VIII & IX correspond to sections from the Guhyagarbhatantra. Among them, most of Pt. VIII corresponds to Sūryaprabhāsiṃha's rgya-cher'grel-pa (P. 4719).

ff. 308-317. On Karmay's references to the writings of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes and Rong-zom Chos-kyi bZang-po. see below, p. 69. note 120.

[3]:

See NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 5. p. 298.

[4]:

The reference given here is to the translation from the French of Gustave-Charles Touissant by K. Douglas and G. Bays. *The Life and Liberation of Padmaaambhava*. Part II, p. 537. See the bibliography under Injunction of Padma discovered at Crystal Rock for further details of the xylograph edition and the French translation.

[5]:

Yeshe Tsogyal. *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*. Part II. p. 416.

[6]:

Sangs-rgyas gLing-pa. *bka'-thang gser-phreng*. pp. 399-400. Kalimpong: Dujom Rinpoche, 1970.

[7]:

dPa'-bo gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, *mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*. pp. 238-239.

[8]:

op. cit.. p. 239.

[9]:

see the appended commentary *phyogs-bcu mun-sel*. p. 6.

[10]:

phyogs-bon mun-sel. p. 6.

[11]:

phyogs-bcu mun-sel. p. 6.

[12]:

'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, *spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po*. pp. 10-11. The three worlds ('jig-rten gsum) referred to in this passage are those of the desire realm ('dod-pa'i khams, Sanskrit *kāmadhātu*), the form realm (gzugs-kyi khams. Sanskrit *rūpadhātu*). and the formless realm (gzugs-med-kyi khams. Sanskrit *arūpyadhātu*). Refer to NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b.

4b. Tantra-texts of the Māyājāla cycle

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The tantra-texts of this Māyājāla cycle which are now extant comprise two complete volumes of the Collected Tantras the rNying-ma-pa (NGB. vols. 14-15), along with a substantial portion of volume 16 and one text in volume 19. They are arranged so as to include the texts accepted by both systems as root tantras (rtsa-rgyud) in NGB. volume 14, and those regarded as exegetical tantras in volume 15, although three of the latter are held to be root-tantras by kLong-chen-pa and another two are held to be root-tantras by Sangs-rgyas gLing-pa and dPa'-bo gTsug-lag. The titles of these extant tantras are listed below, along with a brief résumé of each.

The detailed contents of the three versions of the Guhyagarbha in particular are given in the tables which follow, and the Tibetan chapter titles and pagination for the entire section may be found in Kaneko's catalogue.

NGB. Vol. 14:

1. rgyud gsang-ba'i snying-po, Chs. 22, pp. 1-61;

The basic tantra of the cycle, and subject of this research, which is said to reveal all things to be manifest in and of themselves (thams-cad rang-snang ston-pa), or to reveal mind and pristine cognition to be self-manifesting (sems-dang ye-shes rang-snang-du ston-pa)[1]. Its maṇḍala is that of the forty-two peaceful and fifty-eight wrathful deities celebrated in later gter-ma compilations. The detailed contents of this shorter version are compared with those of two longer versions in the tables below. Translated by gNyags Jñānakumāra and rMa Rin-chen mChog following the instruction of Vimalamitra.

2. dgal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i phyi-ma. Chs. 5, pp. 62-67;

This text, in support of the former, emphasises the dependence of all attainments on the unique buddha-body, the projection of the maṇḍala, instructions on seminal points (thig-le) and vital energy (rlung) and the purification of the components (phung-po).[2] Translated by Jñānagarbha and lotsāwa Vairocana.

3. sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa. Chs. 82, pp. 67-317;

This, the long version of the gsang-ba'i snying-po, emphasises the enlightened attributes (yon-tan) of buddha-hood. See below for a comparison between its 82 chapters and the twenty-two chapters of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra in tabular form. Translated by Vimalamitra and gNyags Jñānakumāra.

4. sgyu-'phrul bzhi-bcu-pa. Chs. 46, pp. 317-415;

This intermediate length gsang-ba'i snying-po emphasises enlightened activity. Its 46 chapters are also outlined in the table below.

5. sgyu-'phrul le-laz. Chs. 33, pp. 415-549;

Emphasising commitments, the le-lag describes in its introductory chapter the gathering of all animate creatures and inanimate things of the ten directions and four times in the Great Identity, and the cycles of buddha-body, speech, mind and rapture which are inexhaustible adornments. Then, its thirty-two remaining chapters closely correspond in their titles, contents and structure to those of the rdo-rje gsang-ba'i snying-po rtsa-ba'i rgyud in NGB. vol. 16. These concern the gathering of all things in the expanse of the female consort, the absorption in the seal of the insubstantial buddha-body, the presence of the seed of reality in all beings and the differences of intelligence, the celestial palace (vimāna). transformation of all things into the wrathful deities and purification by the fire of their pristine cognition, the further ritual service associated with the most secret wrathful deities, the external revelation of the maṇḍala-display of spirituality and the burnt offerings associated with the four rites, [3] power over longevity, disclosure of covert symbols through sacraments and mantra, activities associated with the seals, the attainment of Vajrasattva, making of medicine/ elixir (sman-sgrub). absorption of the most secret maṇḍala and revelation of its higher contemplative images, emanation of the seals, the attainment of Mahādeva and of the maṇḍala of the four guardians,[4] the construction of stūpas, the twenty-one elements, [5] gathering all things in the expanse, gathering of the perfections. levels, skillful means and buddha-fields in intelligence and phenomena (i.e., in Samantabhadra and consort). the most secret accomplishment, the emergence of the maṇḍala of buddha-body. basic & ancillary commitments, an explanation of the commitments, the vision of Vajrasattva. the commitments associated with the seals, and the conclusion which dgal with the conferral of the tantra by Samantabhadra.

6. sgyu-'phrul brgyad-pa. Chs. 8, pp. 549-571;

Emphasising the maṇḍala, this text teaches union with the natural Great Perfection, emanation of the cloud-like maṇḍala of wrathful deities and of the maṇḍala of buddha-speech associated with the feast-offerings of the wrathful deities, the commitment of offering, and the pleasing of the maṇḍala.

7. sgyu-'phrul dra-ba bla-ma chen-po. chs. 13. pp. 572-638;

Emphasising empowerment, this text concerns the recognition of the expanse and pristine cognition as the superior secret bliss, the attainment of the nature of mind in the non-dual disposition of expanse and pristine cognition, the emanation & absorption of the maṇḍala and its secret mantras, emanation of the seals, secret commitments and conferral of empowerment, discipline through compassion, pleasing the maṇḍala through the feast-offerings, subjugation of demons and clarification of the greatness of buddha-body, speech and mind throughout the ten directions, the maṇḍala of awesome buddha-speech and the indestructible commitments. and the supreme bliss of bodhisattvas who have the

8. bshad-brgyud lha-mo sgvu-'phrul. chs. 13. pp. 1-96:

Emphasising the display of reality, this exegetical tantra discusses the maṇḍala of the Tathāgatas and the removal of all obscurations in relation to it. the blissful cycle of secret yoga associated with the body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas, the introduction to non-duality, offering dances which please all the Tathāgatas, the supreme vow of secret bliss associated with all the Tathāgatas, the secret maṇḍala of all the Tathāgatas, the real nature of offerings among the inconceivable purificatory deeds of all the Tathāgatas, the secret buddha-body, speech, mind, supreme offerings of reality and compassion of all the Tathāgatas, emanation of the wrathful Tathāgatas, the wheel of pristine cognition which revolves from the secret nature of all the tathāgatas, the mantras among those aspects which please the. secret nature of all the Tathāgatas, the maṇḍala which is a great gathering of the Herukas among all the Tathāgatas, and a key to the dissemination of the four sections of the Magical Net. Translated by Līlāvajra and rMa Rin-chen mChog.

9. 'jam-dpal sgyu-'phrul dra-ba. Chs. 14. pp. 97-118;[7]

This text, also known as the Litany the Names of Mañjuśrī (Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti, T. 360) in its later translation, emphasises the cohesion of all the piṭakas or vehicles. Its topics concern the enlightened family. manifest awakening through the Magical Net. emanation of enlightened mind, eulogies associated with the five pristine cognitions, enlightened attributes and mantras.

10. rdo-rle sems-dpa' sgyu-'phrul dra-ba gsang-ba thams-cad-kyi me-long. Chs. 13 + root-text, pp. 119-310;

Emphasising the immediate attainment according to the path of liberation (grol-lam cig-char) or the colours and symbolic hand-implements of the buddha-body (sku-mdog-dang phyag-mtshan), its topics include the view. conduct, maṇḍala. empowerment. commitments, attainment, enlightened activity, specific rituals, and spontaneous presence. Translated by Vimalamitra and gNyags Jñānakumāra.

11. dgal sgyu-'phrul dra-ba ye-shes snying-po'i rgyud. Chs. 13. pp. 310-338;

Emphasising the gradual aspect of the path of liberation (grol-lam rim-gyis). it reveals the five aspects of seminal “enlightened mind”, [8] the emergence of spirituality and pristine cognition. the cycle of syllables, contemplation, array of the seals of supreme bliss, consecration of the awareness of secret mantras, the radiance of the great seal, the maṇḍala of perfect skillful means and discriminative awareness, the descent of pristine cognition, spontaneous presence, and the secret maṇḍala. Translated by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes (rDo-rje Yang-dbang-gter).

12. sgyu-'phrul rgya-mtsho. Chs. 22, pp. 339-420;

Emphasising the Immediate aspect of the path of skillful means (thabs-lam cig-char) or the creation stage (bskyed-rim). this text concerns the five aspects of seminal “enlightened mind”, the establishing of all things, the emergence of the maṇḍalas of buddha-speech and mind with their consecrations, the maṇḍala of feast-offerings, the path of the secret vehicle, the secret meaning, the practice of the five impurities,[9] emergence of the indestructible wrathful nature in body, speech and mind along with their consecrations, and spontaneous rites. Translated by Vimalamitra and gNyags Jñānakumāra.

13. sgyu-'phrul thal-ba'i rgyud. Chs. 26, pp. 421-538;

Emphasising the gradual aspect of the path of skillful means (thabs-lam rim-gyis). it concerns the five aspects of seminal “enlightened mind”, the view of great skillful means, self-manifesting buddha-body, speech and mind, attainment of the self-manifest nature through skillful means, appearance of contemplative images through “enlightened mind”, secret mantras, expansion of the three secret centres,[10] the commitments, empowerment, discipline of awareness, entrance into the secret path of skillful means, its actual skillful means, those without skillful

means who are unliberated, conquerors of the past & yogins of the present who are liberated through skillful means, the secret seminal points, discipline of sense-organs and objects, gathering of all things in intelligence and phenomena (= Samantabhadra and consort), and stability in the Magical Net. Translated by Vimalamitra and gNyags Jñānakumāra in 'Phan-yul.

14. rdo-rje sems-dpa' sgyu-'phrul dra-ba-las gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid bstan-pa rol-pa chen-po'i thal-ba'i rgyud, Chs. 13. pp. 539-649;

Its topics include the mind which emerges according to the teaching, its connection with the maṇḍala, the pursuit of the pristine cognition of the seals, the natural maṇḍala, the maṇḍalas of contemplation and images, empowerment, commitments. attainment, enlightened activity, emergence of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities, conduct and the concealed secret teachings. Translated by Vimalamitra and gNyags Jñānakumāra.

NGB. Vol. 16:

15. rdo-rje gsang-ba'i snying-po rtsa-ba'i rgyud de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa. Chs. 33, PP. 1-138:

Also entitled, rgyud-kyi rgyal-po chen-po sgyu-'phrul drya-ba, the chapters of this text correspond in number, structure and title to those of the sgyu-'phrul le-lag. which have already been summarised.

16. gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i khro-bo stobs-kyi rgyud-rgyal. pp. 138-142;

This text is also known as the stobs-kyi dbang-phyug sgrub-pa dka'-ba spyod-pa man-ngag-gi snying-po rgyud. A fragment.

17. khro-bo rin-po-che'i stobs-kyis rnal-'byor dbang-phyug sgrub-pa'i sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i rgyud. PP. 142-147:

Translated by Vimalamitra and Vairocana.

18. rgyud-kyi rgyal-po chen-po sgyu-'phrul snying-po bkod-pa. Chs. 8. pp. 147-163.

Its topics concern cause & condition. ground & natural expression, the quiescence of reality, the wrathful deities who subdue thought, the net of esoteric instructions, the cycle of wrathful exorcism, the absorption of ground, path and result, and a most pleasing eulogy.

KGB. Vol. 19:

19. rnam-snang sgyu-'phrul dra-ba. Chs. 10. pp. 289-395;

This text is also known as rgyud-kyi rgyal-po chen-po sgyu-'phrul drya-ba and is also extant as a later translation by Rin-chen bZang-po (T. 466). Emphasising rituals and feast-offerings, its topics concern the gradual entrance, the maṇḍala. secret mantras. contemplation, unfolding of the pristine cognition of the secret mantras, the offering of the seals, attainment of pristine cognition through meditation on enlightened mind. attainment through the skillful means of sexual practices. burnt offerings and a revelation of all rituals.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This phrase indicates, in the view of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, that the text is representative of the Mahā division of Atiyoga. See below, p. 124. and phyogs-bcu mun-sel. pp. 5-6. The term self-manifesting or manifest in and of itself (rang-snang) implies that the pure appearances of the buddha-level are manifest to buddhas alone. It is contrasted with the term "extraneously manifest" (gzhan-snang) which refers to the perception of other beings—tenth level bodhisattvas and so forth. See NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 46b; Book 2. Pt. 2, p. 64.

[2]:

On the significance of thig-le and rlung. see the appended commentary phyogs-bcu mun-sel. pp. 453ff.: and H.V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*. pp. 270-275. The purification of the components refers to the pañcaskandha. namely form (gzugs-kyi phung-po. Sanskrit rūpaskandha), feelings (tshor-ba'i phung-po. Sanskrit vedanāskandha), perceptions ('du-shes-kyi phung-po. Sanskrit saṃjñāskandha), habitual tendencies which are psycho-physical ('du-byas-kyi phung-po. Sanskrit saṃskāraskandha). and consciousness (rnam-shes-kyi phung-po. Sanskrit vijñānaskandha).

[3]:

The four rites are the first four of the five kinds of enlightened activity enumerated above, p. 140, note 46.. viz. pacification (zhi). enrichment (rgyas). subjugation (dbang) and wrath (drag). See also pp. 121-2, note

[4]:

These are the four guardian kings of the four directions (rgyal-chen bzhi. Sanskrit caturmahārājika). namely, Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the east, Virūdaka in the south, Virūpakṣa in the west, and Vaiśravaṇa in the north.

[5]:

The standard enumeration of eighteen psycho-physical bases (khama bcu-brgyad) is given in Mahāvyutpatti 2040-2058, viz., those of the eye, form, and the consciousness of the eye; of the ear, sound and the consciousness of the ear; of the nose, smell and the consciousness of the nose; of the tongue, taste and the consciousness of the tongue; of the body, touch and the consciousness of the body; and of the intellect. phenomena and the consciousness of the intellect. In addition, the present enumeration of twenty-one includes: 19) the identity of all the tathāgatas which is the source of the preceding eighteen; 20) the field in which enlightenment is accomplished; and 21) the causal base which gives rise to bliss. See e.g., the Eighty Chapter Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa). T. 834, P. 457. bKa'-gyur. vol. 10. 39.3.1.

[6]:

At the end of Volume 14, the compiler of the new edition has inserted a version of the thugs-kyi thigs-pa'i man-ngag. pp. 639-665. This treatise has three central topics, namely, a brief instruction on the appearances of mind in its natural state, the appearances of bewilderment, and the appearances which purify those to be trained. In P. 4738. Vol. 10., 129.4.1-134.1.3. a text of this title is attributed jointly to Buddhaguhya, Vimalamitra and Lilāvajra.

[7]:

There are now two useful editions and translations of this text. viz. R.M. Davidson. "The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī." MCB 20 (1981). pp. 1-69. and A. Wayman. Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī. Boulder/ London: Shambhala. 1985.

[8]:

The five aspects of seminal "enlightened mind" (byang-sems lnga) may be explained according to either grol-lam or thabs-lam. In the former context, they refer to an elaboration of the five verses on non-creation. non-cessation, non-abiding, non-reference. and absence of motion, which respectively give rise to the pañcājñāna (Guhyagarbha. Ch. 2, 6-10). As such the five are known as gYo-ltang byang-chub sems, smon-pa byang-chub sems, 'jug-pa byang-chub sems, gnas-pa byang-chub sems, and mthar-phyin-pa byang-chub sems. In the latter case, as described below, p. 1016, in connection with the sbyor-ba practices and in kLong-chen rab-'byams-pa, dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i spyi-don legs-par bshad-pa'i snang-bas yid-kyi mun-pa thams-cad sel-ba. p. 69b. these five refer to the arousal of the

seminal fluid ("enlightened mind") from its natural position (byang-chub-kyi sems gnas-nas gYo-ba). its descent and coming to rest in the secret centre (gnas-su babs-pas sdad-pa. sic). its retention in the penis (rdo-rjer bzung-bas gnas-pa). its Induction upwards (gyen-du drangs-pas 'jug-sa), and its pervasion of the body (lus-la khrem-pas don-dam-pa byang-chub-kyi sems). See phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 13, PP. 453ff, and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, pp. 106-108.

[9]:

The five impurities (snyigs-ma lnga. Sanskrit pañcakaṣāya) are impurity of life (tshe'i snyigs-ma. Sanskrit ayuḥ-kaṣāya), impurity of view (lta-ba'i snyigs-ma. Sanskrit dṛṣṭi-kaṣāya, impurity of conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs-kyi snyigs-ma, Sanskrit kleśa-kaṣāya). impurity of sentient beings (sems-can-gyi snyigs-ma. Sanskrit sattva-kaṣāya). and impurity of time (dus-kyi snyigs-ma. Sanskrit kalpa-kaṣāya). Mahāvvyutpatti 2335-2340.

[10]:

The three secret centres (gsang-ba gsum) are the indestructible realities of buddha-body, speech and mind.

4c. Chapters of the Guhyagarbha

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Table Comparing the Chapters of the Long (A). Medium (B) and Short (C) Versions of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra, which respectively have 82, 46 and 22 chapters, and are contained in NGB. vol. 14.

[A. sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa. Chs. 82, pp. 67-317;]

Chapter 1—gleng-gzhi 'i le'u. pp. 67-70; = B, pp. 317-320; C, pp. 2-6.

Chapter 2—gleng bslang-ba'i le'u. pp. 70-73: = B, pp. 320-321.

Chapter 3—don-dam-pa-dang kun-rdzob-kyi byang-chub-kyi sems yeshes-su bskyed-pa'i le'u. pp. 73-74: = B, pp. 321-323; C, pp. 6-10.

Chapter 4—chos thams-cad gtan-la phab-pa'i le'u. pp. 74-78: = B, pp. 323-326; C, pp. 10-13.

Chapter 5—chos thams-cad-la chos-nyid-kyi rgyu yod-pa-dang rigs-rgyud chad-pa-dang rigs-brgyud so-so phye-ba'i mdo-bshad-pa'i PP. 78-80: = B, pp. 326-328.

Chapter 6—yi-ge'i 'khor-lo'i 'phreng-ba bkod-pa'i le'u. pp. 8084: = B. pp. 328-331; C, pp. 13-16.

Chapter 7—gsang-ba'i dkyil-'khor kham nyi-shu rtssa-gcig-tu bsdu-nas

thams-cad ma-lus-par dbyings-su bsdu-spa'i le'u. pp. 84-87: = B. pp. 331-333.

Chapter 8—sgyu-'phrul sgrub-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-gi pp. 87-89: = B, pp. 333-335; C. pp. 17-18.

Chapter 9—shin-tu gsang-ba'i dkyil-'khor bsdu-snas lhag-pa'i gzugs-brnyan bstan-pa'i le'u. pp. 89-90: = B. pp. 335-336.

Chapter 10—dkyil-'khor spros-pa'i le'u. pp. 90-93: = B. pp.336-338; C, pp. 18-21.

Chapter 11—gzhal-yas-khang dbub-pa'i thabs dra-ba'i le'u. pp. 93-95: = B, pp. 338-340.

Chapter 12—gsang-sngags-kyi le'u. pp. 95-97: = B, pp. 340-342; C, pp. 21-24.

Chapter 13—dkyil-'khor byin sdus-pa'i gsang-sngags-kyi le'u. PP. 97-98: = B, pp. 340-342; C. pp. 21-24.

Chapter 14—don-dam-pa-dang kun-rdzob byang-chub sems-las phyag-rgya gsung-gi dkyil-'khor rdzogs-pa'i le'u. pp. 98-99.

Chapter 15—chos thams-cad ming-gi mtshan-nyid-de: yum-gyi dbyings-su bsdu-spa'i gsang-ba'i le'u. pp. 99-101: = B. pp. 342-344.

Chapter 16—yan-lag thams-cad dkyil-'khor-du byin-gyis brlabs-nas phayg-rgya spros-pa'i le'u. pp. 101-105: = B. pp. 344-346; C, pp. 24-27.

Chapter 17—mtshon-cha dam-tshig-gi phyag-rgya klu'i le'u. pp. 105-111.

Chapter 18—sgyu-'phrul chen-po thabs-dang shes-rab-du 'byang-ba: phyag-mtshan-gyi le'u. pp. 111-114: = B, pp. 346-351; C. pp. 27-32.

Chapter 19—rdo-rje bkod-pa gsang-ba dam-tshig-gi le'u. pp. 114-118: = B. pp. 346-351; C, pp. 27-32.

Chapter 20—lhag-pa'i gzugs-brnyan-kyis dngos-grub. pp. 118-121: = B. pp. 351-353.

Chapter 21—dbang sbyin-pa'i le'u. pp. 121-123: = B, pp. 353-355; C. pp. 32-34.

Chapter 22—rdo-rje sems-dpa' bsgrub-pa'i le'u, pp. 123-126: = B. pp. 355-357.

Chapter 23—tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-gyi le'u. pp. 126-129: = B, PP. 357-359; C. pp. 34-37.

Chapter 24—tshogs bsgrub-pa'i le'u. pp. 129-130: = B. pp. 359-360; C. pp. 37-38.

Chapter 25—shin-tu gsang-ba'i snying-po man-ngag-gi le'u. pp. 130-133: = B. pp. 360-362; C. pp. 38-41.

Chapter 26—gsang-ba chen-po man-ngag gtan-la phab-pa'i le'u. PP. 133-135.

Chapter 27—phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i snod-bcud bdag-la 'dus-pa-dang: longs-spyod sku-gsung-thugs mi-zad-pa'i rgyan-gyi 'khor-lo bskor-ba'i le'u. pp. 135-136: = B. pp. 362-364.

Chapter 28—mnyes-pa'i le'u. pp. 136-137: = b. pp. 364-365; c, pp. 41-42.

Chapter 29—khro-bo rang-bzhin-gyi dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin nam-par spros-pa: bdud brtul-ba'i le'u. pp. 137-146: B. pp. 365-373; C. pp. 42-51.

Chapter 30—khro-bo'i tshogs chen-po gsung-gi dkyil-'khor spros-pa'i le'u. pp. 146-148: = B. pp. 373-375; C. pp. 51-52.

Chapter 31—khro-bo'i phyag-rgya spro-ba'i le'u. pp. 148-151: = B. pp. 375-378.

Chapter 32—khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor bstan-pa'i le'u, PP. 151-153: = B. pp. 378-379; C. pp. 52-53.

Chapter 33—dgyes-pa chen-po'i byin-brlabs-dang yon-tan mchog-gi ston-pa'i le'u. pp. 153-157.

Chapter 34—'jigs-byed chen-po bsod-nams sbyin-pa'i le'u. pp. 157-159.

Chapter 35—dgyes-pa chen-po'i dkyil-'khor dam-tshig-gi le'u. PP. 159-160.

Chapter 36—'jigs-byed chen-po sngags-kyi bzlas-pa'i snying-po 'byung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 160-161.

Chapter 37—de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi dam-tshig gdug-pa'i tshogs byin-gyi brlob-pa zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 161-165.

Chapter 38—snying-po las thams-cad-kyi le'u. pp. 165-167.

Chapter 39—sgyu-'phrul chen-po brtan-par bzung-ba bdud-rtsi 'byung-ba'i le'u. pp. 167-168.

Chapter 40—sman-grub-pa'i le'u. pp. 168-173: B, pp. 380-385.

Chapter 41—de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi byin-brlabs 'byung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 173-176.

Chapter 42—de-bzhin-nyid-kyi dbyings-nas che-ba'i yon-tan ston-pa'i le'u. pp. 176-181.

Chapter 43—dbab-pa gsung-gi 'khor-lo zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 181-182.

Chapter 44—byin-bsdu-ba-dang dam-tshig dbab-pa'i sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i thugs-rje zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 182-186.

Chapter 45—sgyu-phrul chen-po'i dam-tshig-gi mchod-pa longs-spyod zhes-bya-ba'i le'u . pp. 186-187.

Chapter 46—thub-pa chen-pa bcom-ldan-'das-kyis klu-tshogs pa-i las-rnams 'dul-ba'i le'u. pp. 187-190.

Chapter 47—sgyu-'phrul chen-po rab-tu brgyal-bar byed-pa: dam-tshig bkod-pa'i le'u. pp. 190-193.

Chapter 48—shin-tu 'dul-bar gyur-pa: gnas-dang snying-po 'bul-ba'i le'u. pp. 193-196.

Chapter 49—bka'-drin dran-pa'i le'u. pp. 196-199.

Chapter 50—dam-tshig chen-pos bud-med brtul-ba'i le'u. pp. 199-203.

Chapter 51—mchod-sbyin dam-pa bstan-pa'i le'u. p. 203: - B. pp. 379-380; C, p. 54.

Chapter 52—mchod-sbyin-dang dam-tshig bstan-pa'i le'u. pp. 203-206: = B. pp. 385-387; C. pp. 54-56.

Chapter 53—dam-tshig sum-brgya-pa rtsa-ba bco-lnga mdor-bshad-pa'i le'u. pp. 206-219: = B, pp. 387-388.

Chapter 54—chos thams-cad-kyang khro-bo-dang khro-mo'i rang-bzhin-du gyur-pa-dang: rang-rig-pa'i ye-shes-kyi mes sbyong-ba'i le'u. pp. 219-220: = B. pp. 388-389.

Chapter 55—homa thams-cad ma-lus-par bstan-pa'i le'u. pp. 220-221: = B. pp. 389-390.

Chapter 56—shin-tu gsang-ba'i khro-bo nye-bar bsgrub-pa'i le'u. pp. 221-222: = B, pp. 390-392.

Chapter 57—drag-po homa-gyi pp. 222-224: = B. pp. 392-393.

Chapter 58—thams-cad ma-lus-par dbang-du bsdu-nas: dbang-gi homa-gyi le'u. pp. 224-226: = b, pp. 393-395.

Chapter 59—rgyal-po rgyal-mdzad-kyi rgyal-po'i homa-gyi le'u. pp. 226-227: = B, pp. 395-396.

Chapter 60—thams-cad ma-lus zhi-bar gyur-nas zhi-ba'i homa-gyi le'u. pp. 227-228: = B. pp. 396-398.

Chapter 61—lhun-gyis grub-pa'i 'phrin-las byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 228-230: = B, pp. 398-400; C. pp. 57-59.

Chapter 62—pha-rol-du phyin-pa bcu-dang: sa-bcu-dang: sa-gnyis-dang: thabs-kyi mchog-dang: sangs-rgyas-kyi zhing ma-lus-par: yid-dang chos-su 'dus-par bstan-pa'i le'u. pp. 230-232: = B. pp. 400-402.

Chapter 63—de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i dkyil-'khor nges-pa'i don ma-lus-par mtshan-nyid med-pa'i phyag-rgyar thim-pa'i le'u. pp. 232-234: = b, pp. 402-404.

Chapter 64—tshe-'i cho-ga dbang dam-pa shin-tu gsang-ba'i le'u. PP. 234-236: = B. pp. 404-406.

Chapter 65—phra dbab-pa'i le'u. pp. 236-239: = B, pp. 406-409.

Chapter 66—lha chen-po bsgrub-pa-dang: rgyal-po chen-po bzhi'i dkyil-'khor dgod-cing bsgrub-pa'i le'u. pp. 239-243: = B, pp. 409-413.

Chapter 67—sku'i dkyil-'khor mngon-du phyung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 243-244.

Chapter 68—shin-tu gsang-bar bya-ba'i rgyu dngos-grub thob-nar bya-ba'i le'u. pp. 244-247.

Chapter 69—homa-rnam bzhi'i le'u. pp. 247-248.

Chapter 70—ro-langs-kyi sgrub-pa thabs-kyi nang-na 'di gtso-te: zhing-chen bsgrub-pa'i le'u. pp. 248-251.

Chapter 71—dam-tshig rtsa-ba bco-lnga mdo-rnams gcig-tu bshad-pa'i le'u. pp. 251-254.

Chapter 72—dam-tshig sum-brgya drug-cu-las: rnam-par snros-pa'i le'u. PP. 254-278.

Chapter 73—dam-tshig rnam-par 'phros-pa'i mdo-btus-pa'i le'u. pp. 278-294.

Chapter 74—skyes-bu dam-pa blo-rtsal rab-kyis: rdo-rje sems-dpa'i zhal mthong-gi le'u. pp. 294-297.

Chapter 75—sngon-sbyangs bdag-med skyes-bu-yis: chos-kyi snying-po byang-chub mchog mthong-ba'i le'u. PP. 297-301.

Chapter 76—phyag-rgya dam-tshig-gi le'u. PP. 301-303.

Chapter 77—bzhuks-gnas gzhal-vas-khang bstan-pa'i le'u. pp. 303-305.

Chapter 78—bro-gar-dang rtse 'jo'i le'u. pp. 305-314.

Chapter 79—mnyes-pa'i le'u. pp. 314-315: B, pp. 413-414; C. pp. 59-60.

Chapter 80—yongs-su gzung-ba'i le'u. pp. 315-316: B. pp. 414-415; C, pp. 60-61.

Of the 82 chapters of the longer version, the first 28 concern the maṇḍala of peaceful deities and the remainder the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. The intermediate version omits only three of the former (Chs. 14, 17-26) but thirty-one of the latter (Chs. 33-39, 41-50, 67-78, 81-82) and the short version omits only twelve of the former (Chs. 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14-15, 17, 20, 22, 26-27) but forty-six of the latter (Chs. 31, 33-50, 53-60, 62-78, 81-82). It is therefore in the longer version that the maṇḍala of wrathful deities reaches its fullest expression, while all three versions differ far less in their presentation of the peaceful maṇḍala. Significantly, it was the short version which was most widely disseminated in Tibet, corroborating kLong-chen-pa's assertion that the fully elaborate wrathful rites were carefully guarded and not considered advantageous for the majority of practitioners. One could also speculate, on the analogy of teaching-cycles such as the Prajñāpāramitā, whether the shorter versions were abridged from the longer to facilitate recitation and memorisation, or whether the precedence traditionally given to the shortest is valid. However it is difficult at the present time to make reliable assertions regarding the historical status of these versions with respect to each other.

[1]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This assertion regarding the wrathful maṇḍala is made by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 1, p. 87. E. Conze claims e.g., in *The Perfection Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse summary*, pp. x-xi. that on the evidence of the Sanskrit the basic Prajñāpāramitā sūtra is the version in eight thousand lines (T. 12), and that both the longer and shorter versions are derived from it. Since the Sanskrit manuscripts of our text, which were formerly housed in the Pe-har dKor-mdzod-gling library at bSam-yas, are not available, the problem of chronological sequence cannot in this case be resolved. The Tibetan translations of the three versions are all attributed to the eighth century. See below, pp. 80-83; and for the traditional account of their origin in India, pp. 72-75.

5. Structured Contents of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra

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The underlying structure of the tantra's twenty-two chapters corresponds to the three continue (rgyud-gsum) of the ground, path and result, which have been outlined above. While kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa presents a slightly different account in phyogs-bcu mun-sel (see below p. 543).

The following general structure is observed by most bka'-ma

commentators.

Title and Introductory Words

a) The Peaceful Mandala:
Continuum of the Ground:

Chapter 1—The Introductory Scene (gleng-gzhi'i le'u)

Chapter 2—Generation of Ultimate and Relative Enlightened Mind as
Pristine Cognition (don-dam-pa-dang kun-rdzob-kyi byang-chub sems ye-
shes-su bskyed-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 3—The Establishment of All Dharmas (chos thams-cad gtan-la
phab-pa'i le'u)

Continuum of the Path

Chapter 4—Cyclical Array of the Garland of Syllables (yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i
'khor-lo bkod-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 5—Contemplation that Attains the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul
dra-ba bsgrub-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-gyi le'u)

Chapter 6—Emanation of the Mandala (dkyil-'khor spros-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 7—Absorption of the Mandala and the Secret Mantras
(dkyil-'khor bsdus-ba-dane gsang-sngags-kyi le'u)

Chapter 8—Consecration of All Limbs as the Mandala and the
Subsequent a Emanation of the Seals (yan-lag thams-cad dkyil-'khor-du
byin-gyis brlabs-nas phyag-rgya spros-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 9—Secret Commitment of the Indestructible Array (rdo-rje
bkod-pa'i gsang-ba'i dam-tshig-gi le'u)

Chapter 10—Conferral of Empowerment (dbang sbyin-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 11—Mandala of the Feast-offerings (tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-gyi
le'u)

Chapter 12—Attainment of the Feast-offerings (tshoga bsgrubs-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 13—Nucleus of Most Secret Esoteric Instructions (shin-tu
gsang-ba man-ngag-gi snying-po'i le'u)

Continuum of the Results:

Chapter 14—The Eulogy Which Pleases (mnyes-pa'i bstod-pa'i le'u)

b) The Wrathful Mandala:
Continuum of the Ground:

Chapter 15—Cloud-like Emanation of the Natural Mandala of Wrathful
Deities (khro-bo rang-bzhin-gyi dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin rnam-par spros-pa'i
le'u)

Continuum of the Path:

Chapter 16—Emanation of the Mandala of Buddha-speech of the Great Assembly of Wrathful Deities (khro-bo'i tshogs chen-po'i gsung-gi dkyil-'khor spros-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 17—Revelation of the Mandala of Wrathful Deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor batan-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 18—A Teaching on Genuine Offering and Liberality (mchod-sbyib dam-pa bstan-pa'i le'u)

Chapter 19—Commitments (dam-tshig-gi le'u)

Chapter 20—Consecration of Spontaneous Enlightened Activity (lhun-gyis grub-pa'i 'phrin-las byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba'i le'u)

Continuum of the Result:

Chapter 21—Eulogy to the Wrathful Deities (khro-bo-la bstod-pa'i le'u)
Conclusion:

Chapter 22—That which is Pleasing and Retained (mnyes-pa-dang yongs-su bzung-ba'i le'u).

In the remaining part of this Introduction this celebrated tantra is to be examined in terms of the controversy surrounding its origins, the historical background derived from the biographies of its Indian and Tibetan lineage-holders, and an analysis of its philosophical content.

6. Origin of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra

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Any discussion of the historical position of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra must take note of the controversy regarding its origin which prevailed in Tibet in the centuries immediately following the later propagation of the Buddhist teachings. We have already noted that dissemination of the ancient tantras was restricted in consequence of their secrecy and the denser of their misapplication. In the eleventh century, Lha bLa-ma Ye-shes-'od and others sought to outlaw the teachings and practice of tantra, accusing the adherents of this tradition of engaging in sbyor-sgrol practices. The Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya, one of the main texts expounding these methods, was subjected to criticism. Other such texts, including the Guhyasamājatantra, were paradoxically exempted from this attack. Nonetheless, as we shall see in our examination of the text itself, the expression of these techniques in the Guhyagarbha appears to have a particularly subtle intention when contrasted with the overt sexual and macabre descriptions found in certain other tantras.[1] Further study of the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa, particularly of its Anuyoga and Atiyoga texts, would, it has been suggested, reveal that the the ancient translations appear to have their own distinct terminology and a literary style better suited to the Tibetan language than the rigid

formalism present in many of the later translations, giving some weight to Rong-zom-pa's early critique.[2]

An Incident from the life of Zur-chung-pa Shes-rab Grags alludes to this controversy with some humour. When four students of the bKa'-gdams-pa teacher Khyung-po Grags-se were defeated by Zur-chung-pa in debate and agreed to become his disciples, having understood the profundity of his view, Khyung-po Grags-se announced:[3]

“Anyone who kills one like Zur-chung-pa, who harbours perverse opinions and leads everyone astray, will certainly attain buddha-hood!”

Zur-chung-pa, on hearing this, remained silent without thought of anger and was later seen smiling. On being asked the reason for his mirth, he answered,

“As for doctrines, this, my secret mantra-tradition of the greater vehicle, is it! For it is the tradition of secret mantras that maintains that buddha-hood may be attained by 'liberation'; the dialecticians do not think so. Now, even such a great dialectician as Khyung-po Grags-se has said that anyone who kills one like Zur-chung-pa will attain buddha-hood. So, in his innermost heart, he has turned to my doctrine. Therefore, I am delighted!”[4]

Another eleventh century figure, 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas, reputedly nursing a grudge because he had been refused instruction by Zur-po-che, [5] in his Broadside ('byams-yig) sought to refute the authentic origin of the tantra, imputing it to have “four faults” (skyon-bzhi), and claiming that it was not known in India.[6] The tantra was generally considered by 'Gos to lack the five excellencies (phun-sum tshogs-pa Inga), i.e. those of teacher, retinue, location, teaching and time. He imputed it to have a flawed introduction (klong-log). i.e., that unlike other tantras it had no audience of bodhisattvas; a flawed time (dus-log). i.e., that it speaks of four times instead of three; a flawed maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor lag), i.e., that Vajrasattva appears at the centre of the maṇḍala instead of Vairocana; and a flawed text (rgyud-log) because it refers to other tantras when indicating the auspicious times and days for its practice.[7]

Slight variations on these “four faults” have been reported in the later writings of Sog-bzlog-pa bLo-gros rGyal-mtshan, dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba, and others. Sog-bzlog-pa, in his dris-lan lung-dang rig-pa'i 'brug-agra. p. 33. holds 'Gos Lhas-btsas to have imputed the Guhyagarbha to be flawed in word (sgra-akyon). flawed in meaning (don-skyon), flawed by contradiction (gal-skyon) and flawed by disconnection (ma-'brel-ba'i skyon).

dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston. p. 179, speaks of “four errors” (mi-rigs-pa bzhi). namely, the error of the Guhyagarbha's introductory statement “At the time of this explanation” ('di-skad bshad-pa'i dus-na ces ma-rigs-pa), the error of its maṇḍala which is said to have an immeasurable ground (gzhi tshad-med mi-rigs-pa).[8] the error of its explaining the three times as four times (dus-gsum-la dus-bzhir bshad-pa mi-rigs-pa) and the error of Vajrasattva being the central deity of the

maṇḍala instead of Vairocana (dkyil-'khor-gyi gtso-bo rdo-rje sems-dpas byas-pa mi-rigs-pa).

The rNying-ma response to these four flaws, faults or errors is disclosed in the course of the appended commentary by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa. Vigorous counter-refutations have also been made, in particular by bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i Ral-gri, and the aforementioned authors—dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba and Sog-bzlog-pa bLo-gros rGyal-mtshan.

bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i Ral-gri's commentary is entitled Proof of the Secret Nucleus (gsang-snying sgrub-pa rgyan-gyi me-tog). No longer extant as a distinct work, most of it survives or is cited in other texts, viz. rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog-rtsal, chos-'byung rin-po-che'i gter-mdzod. II, f. 357-61, Dalai Lama V, gan-ga'i chu-rgyun. Vol. 4, p. 397. the Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa. Vol. 1. PP. 500-509 and 524-526 (= nges-don 'brug-sgra). and kLong-chen III bKra-shis rNam-rgyal, legs-bshad dri-med gan-ga'i chu-rgyun. p. 20. References to this treatise are also found in dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston. p. 178.[9]

In Sog-bzlog-pa's version, Rig-pa'i Ral-gri is quoted as follows:[10]

This tantra is genuine for the following reasons: The master Viśvāmītra in his Great Commentary on the Glorious Guhyasamāja (dpal gsang-ba 'dug-pa 'grel-chen. T. 1844), in the course of his comments on the passage (from the Guhyasamāja):

“How far does the Being of Pristine Cognition reach?...” cites the Guhyagarbha as follows: In the abode of Akaniṣṭha without extremes or centre, on the radiant wheel of pristine cognition that is the limitless ground, there is his celestial palace blazing forth with jewels of pristine cognition, completely uninterrupted throughout the ten directions... (Ch. 1, section 3)

And also:

In every Inconceivable (world-system), he appears universally as diverse buddha-body, speech, and mind. (Ch. 1. section 6)

Then, in commenting on the (Guhyasamāja) passage:

“The stūpa should be known to be
The palatial abode of all buddhas...”

He cites the Guhyagarbha as follows:

Its spire is the pristine cognition central to all, in which all maṇḍalas of the buddhas of the ten directions and four times without exception are not distinct from one another, and are of a single essence. (Ch. 1. section 3)

Then, commenting on the passage. “Substantial existence is based on insubstantiality...”, he gives:

Emaho! This wondrous marvelous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.
All is created through the uncreated.
At creation itself there is no creation.
(Ch. 2, 6)

Then, while explaining the meaning of “secret” he says. “The Guhyagarbha speaks of five empowerments.” (Ch. 10)

Moreover, he quotes the passage beginning:

Their [body-colours] are dark blue, white, yellow, scarlet... up to:
... [Pervasive] without extremes or centre,
[It is an unthinkable] spontaneously present [maṇḍala];
(Ch. 6, 9-11)

And he says, “According to the Guhyagarbha. there are three realities.”[11]

In these and all other such instances Viśvamitra begins by mentioning the title Guhyagarbha.

The four perverse faults, etcetera, (criticised by 'Gos Lhas-btsas), are also to be rejected:

1. (When texts begin with the words) Thus I have expounded,[12] it traditionally means that they were compiled by the buddhas themselves, for it is impossible for even the tenth level bodhisattvas to compile all the teachings of the buddhas. As it says in the Verification of the Secret (Śrīguhyasiddhi, T. 2217), composed by master Saroruha as a commentary on the Guhyasamāja:[13]

Most masters claim
That the most radiant tantra.
The glorious Guhyasamāja.
Had as its compiler
The spiritual warrior called Lokeśvara.
But by the kindness of my venerable Guru
I know that the compiler of the glorious Guhyasamāja
Could not have been any other.
And so the being who propounded it
Was that tantra's author.
The indestructible reality of mind.

In accord with this explanation, there is a tradition whereby the

exponent himself is the compiler.[14]

2. As for the Immeasurable ground: the Abhidharma, too, explains that Akaniṣṭha is immeasurable.

3. Concerning the four times: Viśvamitra's Great Commentary (T. 1844) says: "Thus, the fourth time should be known to be sameness..." Moreover, the phrase, By all the lords of ten directions And four times is also found In the new translations. Buddhaguhya explains that it refers to the four aeons.

4. Regarding Vajrasattva's appearance at the centre (of the maṇḍala): even the new translations explain that the foremost figure in the maṇḍala may change positions.

Concerning the passage: The final punctuation dots (tig) are discriminative awareness through which names are applied (Ch. 4, 15): the Indian manuscript of the Guhyagarbha reads sūtrī prajñātiṣyati. Sūtrī ("thread") is the Sanskrit word for the ("measuring line"). Sūryaprabhāsiṃha's commentary (Guhyagarbhatattvanirṇaya-vyākhyāṇāṭikā. P. 4719) explains (tig as being equivalent) to this. Tig is an archaicism.[15]

As for the reference to other tantras (which is found in the Guhyagarbha): All the tantras expounded later on, such as the Hevajra (T. 417-8), also refer to the Summation of the Real (Tattvasaṃgraha. T. 479) which had been delivered first.[16]

Rig-pa'i Ral-gri's argument thus seeks to establish the authenticity of the Guhyagarbha. citing quotations from it which occur in celebrated Indian texts of the Guhyasamāja cycle. While certain tantras may have been written down directly in the Tibetan language, there is no evidence to include the Guhyagarbha among these.

Further criticisms levelled by 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin at the Atiyoga system In general and at Padmasambhava's man-ngag lta-'phreng, a celebrated commentary on chapter thirteen of our text, have been examined by Sog-bzlog-pa and 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, and more recently by N. Norbu and S.G. Karmay.[17] The latter has noted passages from this commentary which occur in gNubs-chen's early work, bsam-gtan mig-sgron, and translated the entire text as reproduced by Rong-zom-pa. In addition, he has brought to our attention certain passages from Sūryaprabhāsiṃha's Indian commentary, the Śrīguhyagarbhatattvanirṇayavyākhyāṇāṭikā, among the Tun Huang documents.[18] The early literary and historical sources thus bring us closer to the traditional view that the text was Introduced in the eighth century.

That many of the rNying-ma tantras were unknown in eleventh century India is not surprising when one considers that their translations are attributed to the eighth century and that the majority of them were considered to have been Imported Into eighth century Tibet, not from the Magadha heartland of North India, but from Oḍḍiyāna and adjacent regions in the north-west. Atiśa, on a visit to the library of Pehar dKor-mdzod gLing at bSam-yaś, is known to have marvelled at the existence of

tantras which no longer survived in Central India.[19]

The arguments raised by Ye-shes 'od and 'Gos Lhas-btsas against the Guhyagarbha lost their impact and controversy by the fourteenth century. Indeed, they became dead issues for Tibetan historians such as 'Gos Lotsāwa gZhon-nu dPal (1392-1481) who personally acquired the Sanskrit manuscript of the root-tantra which had been rediscovered at bSam-yas in the interim.[20]

In consequence, Sog-bzlog-pa could credibly present the following sixteenth century account of its introduction and translation in his slob-dpon sangs-rgyas gnyis-pa padma 'byung-gnas-kyi rnam-par thar-pa yid-kyi mun-sel. p. 128: Therein, perhaps following Sangs-rgyas gLing-pa's bka'-thang gser-phreng. p, 400, he states that the Sanskrit manuscripts of the sgyu-phrul sde-brgyad were taken from Nālanda Vihāra by Padmasambhava and then translated through miraculous ability at rGya-dkar sGra-bsgyur gLing, south of bSam-yas.[21] The texts were then kept at the Ke-tshang in bSam-yas when no longer extant in India.

In his dris-lan lung-dang rigs-pa'i 'brug-sgra. p. 12, Sog-bzlog-pa then repeats 'Gos Lotsāwa's account of the discovery of the Sanskrit manuscript in bSam-yas by the great paṇḍita Śākyaśrī (1127-1225). The latter entrusted it to rTa-ston gZi-brjid, from whom it passed into the hands of Sha-ge Lotsāwa and thence to bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i Ral-gri who composed the aforementioned commentary in defence of the tantra. Subsequently, Thar-pa Lotsāwa retranslated the Sanskrit version of the root-text known as the rgyud phyi-ma. with two additional chapters (Chs. 23 & 24) for the first time, and these were revised by 'Gos Lotsāwa gZhon-nu dPal in person.[22]

Later rNying-ma writers like 'Jigs-med gLing-pa refuse to debate the specific points of 'Gos Lhas-btsas, considering that the past refutations of bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i Ral-gri and Sog-bzlog-pa were unanswerable. That this view was also held by followers of the new translation schools is evidenced by the following dismissive response of the Sa-skyapa scholar, Zi-lung-pa Sāk-ya mChog-ldan (1428-1507):[23]

It is not necessary to prove laboriously that
The rNying-ma-pa doctrines were translated from Indian originals.
It is enough that they are proven to be
The teaching of the emanational master (Padmasambhava).
Although they do not conform with the mantras and symbols
Of those translated from India later on.
The proof of their validity is infallible accomplishment
Through their supreme and common attainment.[24]
They may be compared with the doctrines taken
By supreme, accomplished masters from various, great lands.
And which were not translated in India
From their respective volumes;
For it is said that with Vajrasattva's consent
The compilers of those transmitted precepts
Were themselves permitted to teach them
In the language of each different country.

The rNying-ma-pa doctrinal traditions that definitely were
Translated from India require no proof.
Having formulated arguments one might prove
The indefinite ones to be treatises.
But the great ones who came before in Tibet,
Discovering this to be an artificial, conceptual path.
Have avoided wandering upon it.
As they themselves have explained.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Reference has already been made to these polemics, p. 28, note 54. 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum-gyi rtogs-brjod. pp. 147-148, however, cites a relevant passage from chapter sixteen of the Guhyasamājatantra, indicating that the sbyor-sgrol practices are also prominent in tantras respected by the later schools. Yet there is clearly a distinction in purpose between the apparently shocking coded or twilight language (sandhyābhāṣa) found in tantras like the Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa. and the Guhyagarbha's elaborate and lucid presentation of the sbyor-sgrol practices within the context of advanced meditation. One can only speculate that it was the clear and direct expression of secret teaching in this text which caught the attention of Lha bLa-ma Ye-shes-'od, thereby causing him to link it with the abuse of sbyor-sgrol in eleventh century Tibet. Incidentally, coded language also occurs in the early translations, and a detailed examination of its usage and metaphor would be a valuable study in itself.

[2]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. pp. 102-103, discusses the distinctive terminology of the Anuyoga and Atiyoga texts. His argument that the language employed in higher vehicles is not the same as that current in lower vehicles is taken up by bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje, NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. p. 735, who emphasises that the doctrinal terminology of the prajñāpāramita is absent in the śrāvakapiṭaka and in the lower mantra-texts, while the language of the lower mantra-texts is not found in the Anuttaratantras such as Guhyasamāja. and the terms of the latter do not much occur in Anuyoga and Atiyoga. Reference has already been made, p. 17, n. 12-13; P- 28, n. 53, to the early translators who sought to render meaning rather than word. Their original translations of tantra-texts are contrasted with the revised translations of sūtra-texts, e.g., in 'Jigs-med gling-pa, rgyud-'bum dris-lan. pp. 285-288.

[3]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP- 352-353-

[4]:

Zur-chung-pa, in jest, associates Khyung-po Grags-se's mundane self-interested desire to have him killed with the forceful rite of "liberation"

(sgrol), which 18 explained to transfer the consciousness of another from the body into a buddha-field, acting out of compassion. See phyogs-bcu mun-sel. pp. 396-400; also NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 5, PP- 281 ff.

[5]:

NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 5. PP. 340-341, Pt. 7. p. 764.

[6]:

'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas's work is contained in sngags-log sun-'byin skor. pp. 18-25: Thimpu, 1979. India, as stated above, p. 132. note 11. refers in this context to the Magadha region alone.

[7]:

The tantra clearly has no audience of bodhisattvas because it is held to be a self-manifesting expression of buddha-nature, i.e. it manifests in and of itself (rang-snang) to the buddhas alone. This problem is discussed by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 1. pp. 16-28. where he also explains that the introductory phrase 'di-skad bshad-pa'i dus-na refers to the fourth time. i.e. sameness throughout past, present and future. On the third of 'Gos Lhas-btsas's points. kLong-chen-pa states the central deity of a maṇḍala may rotate. Interestingly, he is the only commentator on the Guhyagarbha who insists on Vairocana being the central deity, rather than Vajrasattva. His reasons for so doing are outlined in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 1, pp. 60-72. As to the fourth point, he claims, phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 11, pp. 417-418, that there many precedents for tantras referring to others which had been delivered earlier in time.

[8]:

kLong-chen-pa, op. cit.. Ch. 1, asserts that in the view of the new translation schools the ground of Akaniṣṭha is also considered to be immeasurable.

[9]:

Refer to S.G. Karmay, op. cit.. p. 277. note 23. The first of these texts is commonly attributed to kLong-chen-pa.

[10]:

The following reproduces almost the entire text of this short work as preserved in Collected Writings Sog-bzlog-pa, Vol. 1, pp. 524-526.

[11]:

The five empowerments referred to are also known as the five empowerments of ability (nus-pa'i dbang lnga), which are included among the fifteen ordinary sacraments of empowerment. See Phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 10. pp. 372-376. They are namely, the empowerment of the listener (nyan-pa'i dbang) which is that of Ratnasambhava, the empowerment of

the meditator (bsgom-pa'i dbang) which is that of Akṣobhya. the empowerment of the expositor (chad-pa'i dbang) which is that of Amitābha, the empowerment of enlightened activity (phrin-las-kyi dbang) which is that of Amoghasiddhi. and the empowerment of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po'i dbang) which is that of the five enlightened families. The three realities (de-kho-na-nyid gsum) in question are explained in Sūryaprabhāsimha's commentary (P. 4719). pp. 2-3. to be the uncreated reality which is the causal basis of the maṇḍala, the resultant reality which is the spontaneous Samantabhadra, and the reality which appears as a chain of seed syllables and is the causal basis of the secret enlightened mind.

[12]:

One should note that these are not the actual words of introduction employed in this tantra-text. The particular reason behind the Guhyagarbha's usage of the words: Thus, at the time of this explanation is discussed by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 1, pp. 16-28.

[13]:

Śrīguhyasiddhi. T. 2217. P. 3061, Vol. 68, 228.4.7-8. Note that the last verse of the Peking version reads thugs-rje che for thugs rdo-rje. The author Sororuha or Padmavajra is regarded as a form of Padmasambhava.

[14]:

The exponent is identified with the compiler in the sense that such advanced tantras are said to be manifested in and of themselves (rang-srang). See the above explanation of this term, p. 42, note 90.

[15]:

The punctuation dots, which delimit or measure the Sanskrit word are, of course, the visarga. See the explanation in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. p. 189.

[16]:

See the above note 109. The Yogatantras, exemplified by the Tattvasamgraha (T. U79). are considered to be earlier than the Anuttarayogatantras. See D.L. Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra. II, v. 57 for this specific reference.

[17]:

'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin's text, chos-dang chos ma-yin-pa rnam-par dbye-ba'i rab-tu byed-pa. is reproduced in Sog-bzlog-pa, nges-don brug-sgra. p. 265, where his contention that the man-ngag lta'-phreng is a commentary on the Guhyasamājatantra and his rejection of the rdzogs-chen terminology are refuted. 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rgyud-'bum-gyi rtogs-brjod, p. 133. repeats the refutation, pointing out that Buddhajñānapāda's Mukhāgama. P. 2716, Vol. 65, p. 10.1.2, refers to Atiyoga in a celebrated line: rdzogs-pa chen-po

ye-shes spyi-vi gzugs. In the rgyud-'bum dris-lan, p. 127. he also quotes mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dBang-rgyal's rejection of 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin's position. On this verse and mNga'-ris Pan-chen's repetition of it at the beginning of his sdom-gsum rnam-nges, a commentary on the integration of prātimokṣa, bodhisattva and mantra vows, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 194b-195b. Book 2. Pt. 6, pp. 706 ff. For recent criticisms, see N. Norbu, *The Small Collection Hidden Precepts*. pp. 8-9. and S.G. Karmay, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-251.

[18]:

Karmay notes, *op. cit.* p. 234, that two passages from man-ngag lta-phreng are cited in gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes's bsam-gtan mig-sgron. Ch. 6. The entire text is reproduced in *Selected Writings of Rong-Zom chos-kyi bzang-po*. For the Tun Huang references, see above p. 37, note 81.

[19]:

The comments of Atiśa on this subject are recorded in his biography. See H. Elmer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, vol. 2, p. 53. passage 076.

[20]:

For perhaps the earliest surviving account of its rediscovery, see 'Gos Lotsawa gZhon-nu dPal, *deb-ther sngon-po, stod-cha*. p. 1365 and G. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, pp. 103-104. 'Gos himself was involved in the retranslation of the roottext.

[21]:

However the colophons of the sgyu-'phrul sde-brgyad and biographical sources concur that Vimalamitra was the translator of the whole collection. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. a. p. 179.

[22]:

According to G. Roerich, *Blue Annals*. p. 104, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of this later version are contained in the sDe-dge xylograph edition of the rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum. Vol. XII (Na). The text does not appear to be contained in NGB.

[23]:

On Zi-lung-pa Sak-ya mChog-ldan and his contributions to philosophical controversy in Tibet, see L.W.J. van der Kuip, *Contributions to the Development at Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*. pp. 10-22. This particular passage is cited by Sog-bzlog-pa in his *Collected Writings*. vol. 1, pp. 519-520.

[24]:

I.e., supreme and common accomplishments (mchog-dang thun-mong-gi dngos-grub), on which see above, note 75.

7. The Indian historical tradition of the
Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra
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The present account of the Indian and Tibetan lineages associated with this tantra is based on sources compiled by bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje in NSTB., Book 2. These include: 'Gos Lotsāwa, deb-ther sngon-po: dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston: Tāranātha, dam-pa'i chos rin-po-che 'phags-yul-du ji-ltar dar-ba'i tshul gsal-bar ston-pa dgos-'dod kun-'byung: kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, snying-thig ma-bu'i lo-rgyus gtona-thun chen-mo: Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, mdo-dbang-gi spyi-don rgyud lung man-ngag-gi gnad sel-byed saron-me: 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, gter-ston brgya-rtsa'i rnam-thar rin-chen bai-dûrya'i phreng-mdzes: and the aforementioned catalogue and index of the Collected Tantras by Rig-'dzin 'Jigs-med gLing-pa and 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub.[1]

King Ja and Kukkurāja:

The legendary historical appearance of the Mahāyoga tantras is associated with King Ja of Sahor, who is considered to be the subject of various prophetic declarations, such as the following from the Saṃvarodayottaratantra:[2]

One hundred and twelve years from now,
When I have vanished from here,
A quintessential doctrine.
Renowned in the three divine realms
Will be revealed by the Lord of Secrets
To one who is named King Ja,
Who will appear by virtue of great merits
At Jambudvīpa's eastern frontier.

And in the kun-bzang ye-shes gsal-bar ston-pa'i thabs-kyi lam-mchog 'dus-pa'i rgyud (NGB. Vol.8):[3]

The Mahāyoga tantras will fall onto the palace of King Ja. The Anuyoga tantras will emerge in the forests of Siṅghala.

While the identity of this figure is obscure—he has been referred to as Indrabhūti the Great, his son, or even a later Indrabhūti contemporaneous with Kukkurāja, Kambalapāda, Saroruha, and Jālandharipā[4] —the tradition clearly recounts that:[5]

While the king was sitting absorbed in the meditative cultivation of the yoga of the lower tantras, a volume containing the Mahāyogatantras, including the Buddhāsāmāyoga (T. 366-367) and an image of their compiler Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi, reportedly fell upon the royal palace, just as in his dream. Then, having performed prayers, he intuitively understood the chapter entitled the “Vision of Vajrasattva” and practised meditation for seven months, relying on that and on the Image of Vajrapāṇi. As a

result he had a vision of Vajrasattva and received from him the empowerment of pristine cognition. Thus, he came to understand the symbolic conventions and meanings of that volume in their entirety.

King Ja first taught these tantras to Uparāja, the celebrated scholar of Sahor. but without success. He then taught the master Kukkurāja, who intuitively understood the chapter on the “Vision of Vajrasattva” (brgyad-bcu-pa. Ch. 74), from the rdor-sems sgyu-'phrul sde-brgyad (NGB. vol. 14), and received a prediction that Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi would subsequently reveal the meanings of this tantra. Accordingly Kukkurāja is said to have been empowered by Guhyapati and verbally instructed by Licchavi Vimalakīrti.[6] He then divided the Mahāyoga texts into eighteen great tantra-piṭakas and taught them to King Ja. The latter wrote many famous commentaries on the tantras including the sgyu-'phrul lam rnam-bkod (p.4737) and the Śṛīguhyagarbhakramadvayoddeśa (P. 4771) which are connected with the Māyājāla cycle.

He himself says in the sgyu-'phrul lam rnam-bkod (p. 4737):[7]

In the eastern domain of Indrabhūti,
At Vajrakūṭa, in India.
I, the noble Indrabhūti,
Practised the Magical Net.
Having been taught by the Lord of Secrets, himself.
I actually realised Vajrapāṇi,
With his retinue of fifty thousand.
Being empowered in wholesome action.
By the practice of disciplined conduct,
I was free from sin, and reached (an exalted) level.

Kukkurāja, known as the “king of dogs” because he reputedly taught the doctrine by day in the guise of a dog to a thousand warriors and yoginīs, and by night went to the charnel grounds with them to perform feast-offerings and other sacramental practices, went to Oḍḍiyāna where he gave a detailed explanation of the five inner tantra-piṭakas of Mahāyoga, including the Buddhasamāyoga. (T. 366-367) on which he had composed many treatises, e.g., the Sadguhyārthadharavyūha (T. 1664-1669), and the Sarvamanṇḍalānuvartipaṇcavidhi (T. 1670). He transmitted the eighteen tantrapiṭakas of Mahāyoga to Śakraputra, or Indrabhūti the younger, who was the king's son; he to Siṃharāja; he to Śakrabhūti, or Uparāja; and finally to the daughter Gomadevī.

As is said in the Māyājālapathakrama (P. 4736):[8]

Then, to the east of Jambudvīpa,
Which rests on the Indestructible Seat,
In a holy palace of precious gems.
In an auspicious and sacred room,
Kukkurāja and Indrabhūti,
Together with Siṃharāja, Uparāja,
Daughter Gomadevī, and others.
Received the empowerment of the Magical Net.
They actually attained the maṇḍala as an assembly;

And manifestly reached the level of Vajradhara.

The lineage then descended to Līlāvajra and Buddhaguhya.[9]
Līlāvajra:

The master Līlāvajra, a native of Samsara, was ordained in Oḍḍiyāna where he studied the Tripiṭaka and became particularly learned in the philosophical tenets of Asaṅga, the ordinary sciences, and all the tantrapl takas, the Magical Net in particular. On an island in Oḍḍiyāna called Madhima he practised and became accomplished in the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti (T. 360). During his ten years at Nālanda, he composed many treatises and expounded them in detail. Those concerning the Magical Net include: a Commentary on the Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī (‘jam-dpal mtshan-brjod-kyi ‘grel-ba. T. 2533) according to the interpretations of the Unsurpassed (Yoga)-tantra; the sPar-khab Commentary on the Secret Nucleus (Śrīguhyagarbhaṭīkā. P. 4718); the Inner-most Point (Cittabindu. P. 4723); the Sixfold Sequence (Kramaṣaṭka. P. 4741); the Clarification of Commitments (Samayacitraprakāśa, p. 4744); and the Propensity for the Commitments (Samayānuśayanirdeśa. p. 4745). Among the students of Līlāvajra, the most prominent were Buddhaguhya and Buddhajñānapāda, who 136 studied the Magical Net (NGB. Vols. 14-16).

Buddhaguhya:

The master Buddhaguhya, a native of Central India, was ordained at Nālanda, where he and master Buddhaśānti were both disciples of Buddhajñānapāda during the early part of the latter's life. On attaining accomplishment through Mañjuśrī, he travelled to Oḍḍiyāna, where he met the master Līlāvajra, and studied the Yogatantras, the Five Inner Unsurpassed Tantrapiṭakas, and the Magical Net in particular. He composed a great many works. Including: the Analytical Commentary on the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po-la 'grel-ba rnam-bshad / rnam-dbye-kyi 'grel): the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (Māyājālavajrakarmakrama, p. 4720); the Significance of the Mandala Doctrine (Dharmamaṇḍalasūtra. T. 3705); the Holy Ornament (Tattvālokaparamālamkāra. P. 4735); the Lesser Met (Sūkṣmajāla, P. 4734) and the Greater Met (drya-chen. P. 4733); the Greater Sequence of the Path (Māyālālapathakrama, p. 4736) And the Lesser Sequence of the Path (sgyu-'phrul lam-gyi rnam-bshad chung-ba, Dz. Vol. 1); as well as treatises on other tantras.

Padmasambhava:

Another lineage of the Mahāyoga tantras also passed from King Ja and Kukkurāja through Sukhasidhī (=dGa'-rab rDo-rje) to Vajrahāsyā and thence to Prabhāhasti of Sahor. The latter was a principle teacher of Padmasambhava, who also received the Magical Met cycle directly from Buddhaguhya. Padmasambhava composed the Great Exegesis (rnam-bshad chen-mo) on the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra, and in Tibet he also taught his celebrated treatise on Ch. 13 of this tantra, entitled the Garland views, A Collection of Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag lta-phreng, P. 4726) to King Khri-srong lde-btsan and his fortunate subjects.

Vimalamitra:

A native of Hastivana in western India. Vimalamitra mastered the sciences and their branches, the sūtras of the lesser and greater vehicles, and the tantras under many masters including Buddhaguhya. He was particularly learned in the Magical Net (Māyājālatantra. NGB. Vols. 14-16); and he composed many treatises, for instance: the commentary on the Secret Nucleus entitled An Illuminating Lamo on the Fundamental Text (sgyu-'phrul man-ngag gsal-ba'i sgron-me. P. 4739); the Removal of Darkness: A Commentary on the Superior Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul bla-ma'i 'grel-ba mun-sel); the Eye-opening Commentary on the Supplementary Magical Net (Vajrasattvamāyājālatantraśrīguhyagarbhanāma cakṣuṣṭikā. P. 4756); the Abridged Commentary on the Eighty Chapter Magical Net (brgyad-bcu-pa'i bsdus-'grel); Opening the Eye of Discriminative Awareness (Mahāyogaprajñāpraveśacakṣurupadeśanāma, p. 4725); the Three stages (Māyājālopadeśakramatraya, P. 4742); Meditative Absorption in the Muḍrās (Māyājālamuḍrādhyāna, P. 4732); a Ritual for Burnt Offerings (Māyājālahomasamkṣiptakrama, p. 4746); a Cremation Ritual (Māyājālalaghudrṣṭāntasyāśravakrama, P. 4748); Sequence at the Seminal Point (thig-rim); and the Short Commentary (Guhyagarbha-piṇḍārtha, P. 4755).

The extant Indian commentaries on the cycle of the Magical Net, including the above, are preserved in the Peking edition of the bsTan-gyur, vols. 82-83. According to Lo-chen Dharmasrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung, pp. 107 ff., they are divided between general exegetical tracts (spyi'i don bshad-pa) such as Līlāvajra's thugs-thig and Vimalamitra's khog-gzhung gsal-sgron, and commentaries ('grel-pa). The latter include root-commentaries (rtsa-'grel) and exegetical commentaries (bshad-'grel). The first group comprises the great Indian treatises on the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayatantra itself, i.e., Līlāvajra, 'grel-pa spar-khab (P. 4718), Sūryaprabhāṣiṃha, rgya-cher 'grel-ba (P. 4719) Buddhaguhya, rnam-dbye 'grel, Padmasambhava, rnam-bshad chen-mo, and Vimalamitra, 'grel-chung piṇḍārtha (P. 4755). The second includes commentaries on the other texts of the cycle such as Vimalamitra's bla-ma'i 'grel-pa mun-sel, le-lag-gi spyan-'grel (P. 4756), and brgyad-cu-ppa'i bsdus-'grel.

In addition, each of the “ten aspects of mantra” (mantradaśatattva), which form the subject-matter of the tantra-text,[10] has its own commentarial tradition:

1. View (lta-ba):

dGa'-rab rDo-rje's la-shan lta-ba'i sgron-ma (P. 4727). Padmasambhava's man-ngag lta-phreng (P. 4726), Vimalamitra's shes-rab sgron-me'i 'grel (P. 4725), Nāgārjuna's gYu-thang-ma kras-dgu (P. 4729), and sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs' Tibetan treatise lta-rim snang-ba bcu-bdun-pa (P. 4728).

2. Conduct (spyod-oa):

spyod-bsdus sgron-ma (P. 5357?). rdo-rje 'jam-mgon.

3. Maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor):

Buddhaguhya's rdo-rje las-rim gnyis-kyi stod (P. 4720), dkyil-'khor chos-don (T. 3705). and Vimalamitra's thig-sum-par rgyal (P. 4733-4, 4738?).

4. Empowerment (dbang):

Buddhaguhya's rdo-rje las-rim-kyi smad (P. 4761), gal-po (P. 4721, 4762), nges-'byed che-chung (P. 4722), thigs-pa gsum (P. 4738).

5. Commitment (dam-tshig):

Lilāvajra's dam-tshig gsal-bkra (P. 4744), dam-tshig phra-rgyas (P. 4745).

6. Activity (phrin-las):

Vimalamitra's sbyin-sreg (P. 4746), ro-areg (P. 6747), sku-gdung las-phreng (P. 4749), dur-khrod bde-ba'i dpe-chung rang-gnas (P. 4748).

7. Attainment (sgrub-pa):

Indrabhūti's lam-rnam-bkod (P. 4737). rim-pa gnyis-pa (P. 4771). Buddhaguhya's lam-rim che-chung (P. 4736. DZ. Vol. 1), Lilāvajra's rim-drug (P. 4741), Vimalamitra's rim-gsum (P. 4742), 'od-rim (P. 4731). drya-chen (P. 4733). Buddhaguhya's drya-chung (P. 4734). dam-pa rgyan (P. 4735).

8. Contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin):

Vimalamitra's Phyag-rgya bsam-gtan (P. 4732), khro-bo phyag-rgya gcig-pa (p. 4779). rtse-gcig bsdus-pa phyag-rgya bzhi-pa'i bsam-gtan (P. 4778).

9. Offering (mchod-pa);

Padmasambhava's za-tshogs (P. 4750), dur-khrod, bde-ba gtor-chung, ho-chen, ho-chung, gYos-yig che-chung, Vimalamitra's thabs-mchog dpag-gi mi-lang-ba, dbyig-gi sgron-ma.

10. Mantra and Seal (gngags-dang phyag-rgya):

phrin-las shar-ba brgyad.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See the bibliography for further information. These and other sources are listed in a special section at the end of NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 835-837.

[2]:

On this verse, see S.G. Karmay, "Kins Tsa/ Dza and Vajrayāna," pp. 197-199.

[3]:

NGB. Vol. 3. no. 46. For a traditional account of the appearance of Anuyoga in Śrī Laṅkā, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, PP. 72-77.

[4]:

The traditions concerning this figure and the intermediate Indrabhūti have been studied by S.G. Karmay, "King Tsa/ Dza and Vajrayāna." For

other references to intermediate Indra-bhūti, see Tāranātha, History of Buddhism In India. pp. 241, 410; and NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 78-79.

[5]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 80.

[6]:

Vimalakīrti is best known to the Buddhist world through the magnificent Mahāyāna sūtra bearing his name, i.e. the Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra. T. 176, on which see E. Lamotte, L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti; R. Thurman, Holy Teaching Vimalakīrti; and the translation from Chinese by Charles Luc.

[7]:

Peking bsTan-'gyur. Vol. 83, p. 120.2.8-120.3.2.

[8]:

Peking bsTan-'gyur. Vol. 83. p. 103-5.5-103.5.7.

[9]:

See N. Norbu, The Small. Collection of Hidden Precepts, pp. 38ff. S.G. Karmay, op. cit.. pp. 109-112, states that the biographies of the tantra-master Buddhaguhya and of the exponent of the Great Perfection Buddhagupta were confused by 'Gos Lostawa gZhon-nu dPal in the debther sngon-po. Even If this were the case, it is probable that the figure in question here is Buddhaguhya since the texts outlined in the biography are based on Mahāyoga. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2. PP. 87-90.

[10]:

These ten aspects are discussed below, pp. 114-123. within the framework of 'Ju Mi-pam rNam-rgyal's commentary spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po.

8. Appearance and Translation of the Māyājāla Cycle in Tibet

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'Jigs-med gLing-pa, In his Catalogue to the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa. p. 464, 1-3, states that the Guhyagarbha was definitively translated by Vimalamitra, gNyags Jñānakumāra and rMa Rin-chen mChog. Previously, it had been translated by Buddhaguhya and Vairocana, and in an Intervening period by Padmasambhava and gNyags Jñānakumāra.

At Mount Kailash, Buddhaguhya instructed sBas 'Jam-dpal and Bran-ka

Mu-kti among others on texts belonging to the Guhyagarbha cycle, including the man-ngag rnam-par bkod-pa (P. 4737). In collaboration with Vairocana, he made the earliest translation of the root-tantra.

Padmasambhava instructed gNyags Jñānakumāra in the Guhyagarbha and in his own Garland of Views: A Collection Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag ltar-phreng. p. 4726). Together they made the intermediate translation. Jñānakumāra instructed the Sogdian dPal-gyi Ye-shes; and, with Zhang rGyal-ba'i Yon-tan, he Instructed gNubs Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes. Vimalamitra then expounded the Eight Sections of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva (sgyu-phrul sde-brgyad. NGB. Vols. 14-15), including the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayatantra, which is the root of the Eighteen Great Tantra-piṭakas. He expounded them to rMa Rin-chen mChog, and translated them with the latter's assistance, and that of gNyags Jñānakumāra. Their version is therefore the latest of three, and it is known as the basic translation.

Later, the manuscript was translated by Thar-lo Nyi-ma rGyal-mtshan and 'Gos lotsāwa gZho-nu dPal. Their version is called the “creative translation” (rtsal-gyur) because they had no supervising paṇḍita. In addition, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters were also translated by Thar-lo in accordance with the rediscovered Sanskrit manuscript.

kLong-chen-pa (1308-1363), having examined the extant Tibetan version in great detail, made the following observation in his phyogs-bcu mun-sel concerning certain appended verses of the tantra:[1]

Now, certain persons hold that these appendices are absent in this root-tantra but were extracted from other texts in the cycle of the Magical Net and Inserted into their respective chapters by rMa Rin-chen mChog, and that (the versions of the text) were divided by gTsug-rum Rin-chen gZhon-nu into those which have appendices and those which do not.

Again, there are some who hold that the version without the appendices was translated by gNyags Jñānakumāra, and that the version with appended passages had them inserted into the translation by rMa Rin-chen mChog. There are even some who say that rMa himself concealed them out of envy at La-gsum rGyal-ba Byang-chub.[2] But the truth of the matter is that the appendices are lacking in both the earliest translation made by Buddhaguhya and Vairocana and in the intermediate translation which was made by Padmasambhava and gNyags Jñānakumāra. They are present in the later translation which was made by Vimalamitra, gNyags Jñānakumāra and rMa Rin-chen mChog. Therefore it is clear that the Sanskrit manuscripts themselves had a number of redactions. Should anyone wish to know that this is the case, the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness In Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8) itself had a number of manuscripts, extant in the three redactions of the parivrājika gZo-sbyangs, 'Phreng-ba-can, and sDe-can; and in certain texts such as the Sitātāpatra (T. 3083, 592) a number of redactions is similarly found. Therefore it is not certain that these (variant passages) were inserted by the Tibetans. One should know that the discrepancies in the translations of this tantra were to be found in the Sanskrit manuscripts. Numerous redactions of Sanskrit manuscripts occur because there is a distinction

between those (versions) in which the meaning is clearly expressed and those in which it is not.

rMa Rin-chen mChog instructed gTsug-ru Rin-chen gZhon-nu and Kye-rje mChog-skyong, who both Instructed Zhang rGyal-ba'i Yon-tan and Dar-rje dPal-gyi Grags-pa. The former taught this tantra many times in Central Tibet, gTsang, and Khams, and the lineages descended from him became known as “the transmitted precepts of mChims-pu”, or as “the lineage of esoteric Instructions”.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 6, pp. 246-248.

[2]:

La-gsum rGyal-ba Byang-chub, who, like rMa Rin-chen mChog, was one of the eight major translators and one the seven monks who were originally tested for ordination, was empowered by Padmasambhava at Khra-brug, and in consequence was able to assume a meditative posture in the sky. See K. Dowman, *Sky Dancer*. pp. 283-4 and passim; Yeshe Tsogyal, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*. Part II, p. 592: also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, p. 185.

9. The bka'-ma lineage

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The succession known in Tibet as the “distant lineage of transmitted precepts” (ring-brgyud bka'-ma) incorporates all those texts and instructions of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga which were Introduced from India and gradually passed down in an oral and literary tradition. It is contrasted with the “close lineage of treasures” (nye-brgyud gter-ma), which comprises those cycles discovered anew in each successive generation. This “distant lineage” is identified preeminently by its synthesis of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga, named mdo-sgyu-semgsum after the titles of the principal text of each—the Magical Net (sgyu), the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (mdo) and the All Accomplishing King (sems) which represents the Mental Class (sems-sde) of Atiyoga. This common heritage of all the rNying-ma-pa lineages in Tibet fell first to gNyags Jñānakumāra, secondly to gNubs Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes and finally to the Zur family.

gNyags Jñānakumāra:

gNyags Jñānakumāra was fully ordained by Śāntarakṣita and he became a celebrated adept of Vajrāmṛta and Vajrakīla. He followed the most learned and accomplished masters of India, and acquired great learning in grammar, logic, dialectics, and in the outer and inner mantra-texts. He translated many sūtras and tantras, becoming the confluence of of the “four great rivers of the distant lineage” which derived from the

teachings of Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairocana and gYu-sgra sNying-po.[1]

gNyags mastered the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum, and above all, through his interpretations and expositions, he transmitted the Magical Net to numerous students. The foremost were known as the “eight glorious adepts of Vajrakīla”, namely, his four earlier disciples—the Sogdian dPal-gyi Ye-shes, 'O-bran dPal-gyi gZhon-nu, gNyan-chen dPal-dbyangs, and Thag-bzang dPal-gyi rDo-rje—and his four later disciples—Lam-mchog dPal-gyi rDo-rje, Dar-rje dPal-gyi Grags-pa, Gra dPal-gyi sNying-po, and Lha-lung dPal-gyi rDo-rje.[2]

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes:

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes, a native of Grags, was empowered and accomplished in the maṇḍala of Mañjuśrī. He studied many outer and inner tantras including the Guhyagarbha and their esoteric instructions under Padmasambhava, Śrī Siṃha, Vimalamitra, Vasudhara and Kamalaśīla, as well as the Tibetan translator gNyags Jñānakumāra, Sog-po dPal-gyi Ye-shes and Zhang rGyal-ba'i Yon-tan in particular.[3] His compositions include:

- The Armour against Darkness, which is a vast commentary on the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (mdo'i 'grel-chen mun-pa'i go-cha):

- The Disputant's Sword Which Cuts Through Difficulties (dka' gcod smra-ba'i mtshon-cha):

- The Commentary on the Realisation of the Eighty-Chapter Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul brgyad-cu-pa'i mngon-rtogs 'grel); and

- The Lamp for the Eve of Contemplation—which is an esoteric instruction of the Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen-gyi man-ngag bsam-gtan mig-sgron).

gNubs-chen's most authentic student was Khu-lung Yon-tan rGya-mtsho,[4] who received all his empowerments, tantras, and esoteric instructions, and passed the lineage on through:

Ye-shes rGya-mtsho and Padma dBang-rgyal (his sons);

Lha-rje Hûm-chung (the former's son);

Nyang Shes-rab mChog;

Nyang Ye-shes 'Byung-gnas of Chos-lung;

Lha-rje Zur-po-che.

This lineal descent is known as the tradition of Rong, or else the tradition of Nyang, after their clan name. Before considering the importance of the Zur family which maintained this “distant lineage” down to the seventeenth century it is appropriate to examine the role of Rong-zom Paṇḍita, who was a contemporary of a Zur-po-che, and that of kLong-chen Rab-'byama-pa in relation to the Guhyagarbhatattvayiniścavamahānta.

Rong-zom Paṇḍita, Chos-kyi bZang-po:

Chos-kyi bZang-po of Rong, the celebrated eleventh century mahāpaṇḍita of the rNying-ma school, was a native of sNar-lung-rong, Rulag, in lower gTsang.

He received the lineage of the instructions of Padmasambhava, which had been transmitted successively from the latter through:

sNa-nam rDo-rje bDud-'joms;
mKhar-chen dPal-gyi dBang-phyug;
sGra rDo-rje gZhon-nu;
Zhang-zhang Yon-tan Grags;
Rong-ban Yon-tan; and
Rong-ban Tshul-khrims Rin-po-che (i.e. his father).

In his youth, while studying the ancient translations under one mDoston Seng-ge, he once dreamed that he was eating a porridge he had prepared of the Guhyagarbha. with a vegetable broth made of the Buddhasamāvoga.

He told this to his master, who said,

“How wonderful! It is a sign that you have completely internalised those doctrines. You should compose a commentary on each.”

Among his compositions therefore was the first major Tibetan commentary on the Guhyagarbha (gsang-snying 'grel-pa)—the Precious Jewel Commentary (dkon-cog 'grel, NMKMG. Vol. 25), so called because of its Introductory words which say:

The nature of the Three Precious Jewels
Is enlightened mind.

This commentary and kLong-chen-pa's phyogs-bcu mun-sel (NMKMG. Vol. 26) are regarded as the two major expositions of the tantra according to the Atiyoga standpoint, in contrast to those of the “distant lineage” which emphasise the Mahāyoga position.

bDud-'joms Rin-po-che says of these:[5]

The commentary by the great, all-knowing kLong-chen-pa, entitled Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions (phyogs-bcu mun-sel) clearly elucidates (the Guhyagarbha). commenting on it according to the tradition of the “king of vehicles” (i.e. Atiyoga). On the other hand, this commentary by the all-knowing Rong-zom-pa appears like a great chest that is sealed tight, vastly commenting on the expanse of reality. Knowing that these two are the main Tibetan commentaries on the Guhyagarbha provides the Intellect with the potential for great power.

Rong-zom-pa's role as the first major Tibetan commentator was criticised by scholars from the four Tibetan provinces,[6] including the noted opponent of the rNying-ma tantras 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas, but he is reported to have subdued these critics in debate. One could argue that Rong-zom-pa merely revived the commentarial tradition established in

Tibet by sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, gNyan dPal-dbyangs, and gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes prior to the later dissemination of the teaching. Yet, despite the novelty of indigenous composition in the eleventh century, his critics in fact found that he adhered to the scriptural authorities, could bear logical examination, and that he contradicted neither syllogistic proof nor the teachings of their gurus.

Concerning this controversy, bDud-'joms Rin-po-che adds:[7]

This reasoned argument appears to be a learned axiom, when scrutinised fairly. In general, a doctrine is no more important merely because it originated in India. A distinction of good and bad treatises on the basis of country is not known in learned circles. If the author was one who abided on the level of accomplishment, the treatises composed by him should be valid. So, it is proven that whether they originated in India or Tibet makes no difference. Sometimes, too, Tibetan treatises are better than Indian treatises. One should regard as reliable those composed by accomplished Tibetans, whose pristine cognition was manifest, rather than those written by ordinary Indian scholars, who based themselves on learning in grammar and logic.

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa:

The celebrated rNying-ma-pa master kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1363), a native of Ngan-lam, studied the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum and the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa under four teachers, including Dan 'Phags-pa, gZhon-nu Don-grub, and Myos-mthing-ma-ba Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa. His life story is presented in some detail by bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje in NSTB,[8] Among his many compositions which firmly established the terminology of the Great Perfection system,[9] there is an interpretation of the Guhyagarbhatantra from the Atiyoga perspective. entitled the Trilogy Which Dispels Darkness (mun-sel skor-gsum). This work comprises the bsdus-don ma-rig mun-pa sel-ba (NGKMG. Vol. 27). which in 14 folia provides an analysis of the chapter-divisions of the Guhyagarbha, the spyi-don yid-mka' mun-pa sel-ba (NGKMG. Vol. 27). which in 89 folia analyses the scope and structure of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings, and the gzhung-don phyogs-bcu'i mun-pa sel-ba, which in 313 folia (pp. 629) provides both general introductory explanations of each section of the Guhyagarbha and a detailed interlinear commentary of its "verses of indestructible reality" (rdo-rje'i tshig). The translation of the Guhyagarbha contained in the present study is based on and accompanied by this Interlinear commentary.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These so-called "four great rivers of the distant lineage" comprise: the river of conventional textual exegesis, along with the commentaries and lecture notes; the river of Instruction of the aural lineage, along with the essential writings and the guidance which lays bare the teaching (dmar-khrîd); the river of blessing and empowerment, along with the means for conferral and the introductions; and the river of practical techniques, rites of enlightened activity and attainment, along with the wrathful mantras of

the protectors of the teaching. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, p. 282. On the translators Vairocana and gYu-sgra sNying-po. see S.G. Karmay, "The Origin and Early Development of the Tibetan Religious Traditions of the Great Perfection", Pt. 1, which is a summary of the Biography Vairocana (rje-btsun thams-cad mkhyen-pa bai-ro-tsa-na'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo); also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. ft, pp. 187-190.

[2]:

On these figures, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, PP. 289-290. Among them, gNyan-chen dPal-dbyangs was a prolific commentator, his works including treatises on the Guhyagarbhatantra. viz. the thugs-kyi sgron-ma (P. 5918), the lta-ba yang-dag sgron-ma (P. 5919), the thabs-shes sgron-ma (P. 5921), and the lta-ba rin-po-che sgron-ma (P. 5923).

[3]:

On Śrī Siṃha see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 130-137, Pt. ft, pp. 187-190. On Vasudhara, op. cit.. Book 2, Pt. 5, PP. 290 ff., and on Zhang rGyal-ba'i Yon-tan, op. cit.. Book 2, Pt. 5, p. 291. Kamalaśīla's role in the bSam-yas debate is recorded in sBa-gsal-snang, sba-bzhed; R.A. Stein, Une Chronique Ancienne de bSam-yas; G. Tucci, Minor Buddhist Texts. Pt. II; and J. Broughton, "Early Ch'an in Tibet.". See also S.G. Karmay, op. cit., pp. 153-190 on the relationship between the Tibetan cig-car-pa tradition and the Hva-shang.

[4]:

On this figure, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 300-304.

[5]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, P- 459

[6]:

The four provinces of stod mnga'-ris skor-gsum, dbus-gtsang, a-mdo, khams.

[7]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. p. 770.

[8]:

NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 4. pp. 238-277.

[9]:

According to NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, p. 235. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's teacher Kumārādza also played a major part in the establishing of rdzogs-chen terminology. In addition to the Trilogy Which Dispels Darkness. which occupies most of the present study, the most celebrated treatises by

kLong-chen-pa, are the Seven Treasures (mdzod-bdun). the Trilogy of Rest (gnal-gso skor-gsum). the Trilogy of Natural Liberation (rang-grol skor-gsum). and the Three Cycles of Further Innermost Spirituality (yang-tig skor-gsum). See the bibliography for details.

10a. The Zur family (Introduction)

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Lha-rje Zur-po-che Sâk-ya 'Byung-snas, a native of Yar-rdzong or gSar-no in mDo-khams, received the three stages of ordination from bLa-chen dGongs-pa Rab-gsal.[1] Under his grandfather, Rin-chen rGya-mtsho, he studied the sūtra and tantra-texts, including the cycle of the Magical Net (NGB. Vols. 16-16). Then he received instruction on the Magical Net and the Mental Class (sems-sde) from Nyang Ye-shes 'Byung-gnas of Chos-lung, on the mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa, the sPar-khab Commentary ('grel-pa par-khab) and the Great Perfection from Nam-mkha'-sde; and on the Māyājālapathakrama (P. 6736) from 'Bre Khro-chung of upper Nyang. Zur-po-che is known to have brought together the root and exegetical tantras; the root-texts and their commentaries; the tantras and their means for attainment; and he applied them in practice.

Foremost among his disciples were the four “summits”:[2]

- Zur-chung Shes-rab Grags, who had arrived at the summit of the view, and intention;
- Me-nyags Khyungs-grags, who had arrived at the summit of the exegesis of the Guhyagarbha
- Zhang 'Gos-ehung, who had arrived at the summit of vast knowledge; and
- bZang-sgom Shes-rab rGyal-po, who had arrived at the summit of meditative practice.

Zur-po-che inhabited 'Ug-pa-lung in the Shangs valley for many years, and constructed his temple in that place, where he had visions of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities and of the Fifty-eight Blood-drinkers.

As he himself said:[3]

I perceive all the earth, stones, mountains and rocks of 'Ug-pa-lung to be the host of peaceful and wrathful deities. But in particular, I always see this southern peak of dBen-ser-mo as the Buddhas of the Five Enlightened Families. Therefore, I shall build a temple of the peaceful deities.” Since in the past, the great accomplished masters were completely mindful of preserving secrecy, Zur-po-che said that it was Improper to make Images according to the secret means for attainment in places where many people would congregate, and commissioned images according to the tradition of the tantras. The frescoes painted to the right were of the peaceful deities of the Magical Net. and those on the left were of the blazing wrathful deities.

His main student and nephew, Zur-chung-pa Shes-rab Grags

(1014-1074) mastered and widely propagated the “distant lineage”, including the Guhyagarbha. Foremost among his students were the “four pillars”: sKyo-ston Sâk-ye of Gung-bu who was the pillar of the Mental Class; Yang-kheng bLa-ma of sKyong-lung who was the pillar of the mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa; gLan Sâk-ya bZang-po of Chu-bar who was the pillar of the Magical Net (NGB. Vols. 14-16); and mDa'-tig Jo-sâk of Nag-mo-re who was the pillar of ritual and means for attainment.

It was Zur-chung-pa's son, Zur sGro-phug-pa Sâk-ya Seng-ge (b. 1074) however who effectively popularised the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra In Tibet. He began his study of this text in his fifteenth year under gLan Sâk-ya bZang-po of Chu-bar, and received the entire exegetical tradition of the Zur family from the other three main students of Zur-chung-pa, who were invited to his residence.

His accomplishment in the Guhyagarbha is illustrated by the following incident:

Once, when he was teaching the doctrine in sGro-phug, he sat on a backless teaching-throne, and students surrounded him on all sides. He appeared to be facing his audience in all directions. Therefore, they were convinced that he was actually the representative of the lord of the maṇḍala of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva (NGB. Vols. 14-16) and he became renowned as an undisputed emanation.

Despite the recent criticisms of Lha bLa-ma Ye-shes 'od and 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas, sGro-phug-pa could reportedly gather five hundred literate students during the summer and winter and three hundred during the autumn and spring. Owing to his mastery of this tantra, the two mainstream lineages diverged from him, i.e., the Zur lineage of Central Tibet and the Khams lineage of Eastern Tibet.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The three stages of ordination are those of the renunciate (pravrajyā), the novitiate (śramaṇera), and full monkhood (upasampadā). On bLa-chen dGongs-pa Rab-gsal, who maintained the Vinaya lineage in north-eastern Tibet after the persecution of gLang Dar-ma, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 3. pp. 169-173.

[2]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. p. 313.

[3]:

NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. p. 315.

10b. The Zur Lineage in Central Tibet

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In Central Tibet, Zur sGro-phug-pa's principle disciples were known as the four “black ones”; the four “teachers”; and the four “grandfathers”. The four “black ones” (nag-po, so-called because their names all contained the element nag, “black”) included lCe-ston rGya-nag of Upper Nyang, the main lineage-holder of the Central or “Upper Zur Tradition”.

rGya-nag studied under sGro-phug-pa from the age of thirty for eleven years, and owing to his Intellectual abilities and devotion, sGro-phug-pa bestowed upon him the fundamental texts and practical instructions for Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. For this reason, he became the most complete lineage-holder of the Zura. His many students included dBus-pa sTon-sak, dBus-pa Zhig-po, and his own nephew, Yon-tan gZungs (b. 1126) who studied the three classes of inner tantra under him for thirteen years.

The lineage thus descended as follows:

- lCe-ston rGya-nag;
- Yon-tan gZungs and dBus-pa Zhig-po;
- Zhig-po bDud-rtsi;
- rTa-ston Jo-ye (compiler of the former's teachings);
- rTa-ston gZi-brjid (compiler of the biographies of this lineage)

The latter also composed his own extensive commentary on the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścavamahātantra.

gYung-ston-pa rDo-rje dPal, however, in his commentary on the Guhyagarbha (gYung-'grel), digresses to provide us with the following divergent lineage, based on the exegesis of the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā, p. 4718):

- sGro-phug-pa;
 - Bying-ston of gTsang and Nye-ston Chos-kyi Seng-ge of sGong-drings;
 - gTsang-nag 'Od-'bar;
 - Mes-ston mGon-po;
 - bLa-ma Srong;
 - Pak-shi Sak-ya 'od;
 - rTa-nag bDud-'dul;
 - mDa' Sak-ya 'Phel;
 - Zur Byams-pa Seng-ge;
 - gYung-ston-pa rDo-rje dPal.
- Zur Byams-pa Seng-ge

gYung-ston-pa's own teacher, Zur Byams-pa Seng-ge, was the son of Zur Nyi-ma Seng-ge and great grandson of Pak-shi Sak-ya-'od. In his fifteenth year, at 'Ug-pa-lung, he studied the Guhyagarbha under mDa' Sakya 'Phel, and then, in his seventeenth year, he composed a Definitive Presentation of the Tantras (rgyud-kyi rnam-bzhag). He subsequently received the Māyājāla-pathakrama (P. 4736) and the Great Perfection from lCe-ston Grub-pa 'Bum, the empowerments of beneficence, ability, and profundity according to the Zur tradition of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul zur-lugs-kyi phan-nus-zab-gsum-gyi dbang) from rTa-ston gZi-brjid of La-stod, and

many other teachings. Byams-pa Seng-ge himself had numerous disciples, including sixteen who had mastered the Māyājāla-pathakrama (p. 4736). the Guhyagarbha and the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā. P. 4718). Foremost among them were gYung-ston rDo-rje dPal, the senior disciple of his early years, and rTa-nag sGrol-ma-ba bSam-grub rDo-rje, the foremost disciple of his later years.

gYung-ston rDo-rje dPal:

gYung-ston-pa of the gLan clan (3284-1365) was learned in dialectics, Abhidharma, and the mantra-traditions, ancient and new. He became the genuine spiritual son of Kar-ma-pa III, Rang-byung rDo-rje. From Zur Byams-pa Seng-ge, however, he obtained the mdo-sgyu sems-gsum. representative of the “distant lineage”, and he composed the Illuminating Mirror (dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i rgyud-don gsal-byed me-long, NGKMG. Vol. 28), a commentary on the Guhyagarbhatantra which surpassed other exegetical traditions in its popularity. His approach is described as classificatory and he rearranged the fifth chapter, which became a focal point of study for later masters such as Zur Chos-dyings Rang-grol. Later commentators such as Nam-mkha' Rin-chen, Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, Kah-thog dGe-brtse Paṇḍita and 'Gyur-med Phan-bde'i 'Od-zer were frequently influenced by his interpretations.[1]

rTa-nag sGrol-ma-ba bSam-grub rDo-rje:

bSam-grub rDo-rje from rTa-nag gNas-gsar (1295-1376) studied extensively under Zur Byams-pa Seng-ge and became learned in the Magical Net. He also received its empowerment from gLan Nya-tshal-pa bSod-nams mGon-po. Among his students were Zur Ham Sak-ya 'Byung-gnas of Yang-dben, from whom issued the so-called “Zur lineage” (zur-brgyud) and his own son, Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen, from whom Issued the “son's lineage” (sras-brgyud).

Zur Ham Sak-ya 'Byung-gnas:

Zur Ham was the son of the afore-mentioned Zur bZang-po dPal. In his fifth year he delivered an astonishing public exegesis of the Guhyagarbhatantra. Under Sa-bzang Mati Pan-chen,[2] gYung-ston-pa, and 'Jam-dbyangs bSam-grub rDo-rje he made a general study of dialectics, Sūtras, Tantras and esoteric instructions. Including the Māyājālapathakrama (P. 4736), the Śrīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra (T. 832), and the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā. P. 4718). He extensively propagated the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum to his students, including Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen and gNyal-pa bDe-legs-pa.

Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen rGyal-mtshan dPal-bzang-po:

Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen, sGrol-ma-ba bSam-grub rDo-rje's son (1350-1431), mastered the doctrinal cycles of the Magical Net including the Guhyagarbhatantra under his own father and Zur Ham Sak-ya 'Byung-gnas. At the age of fourteen, he was able to confer empowerment on others. He then composed a Great Commentary on the Guhyagarbha (gsang-snying 'grel-chen), and a Detailed Exposition Of the Array of the Path of the Magieal Net (lam rnam-bkod-la rnam-bzhag) when he was about forty. His other compositions include an Extensive Descriptive Basis (for the Rites) of the Wrathful Deities (khro-bo-la mngon-par-rtogs-pa

rgyas-pa) and a Detailed Ceremony for the Rite of Tie to the Higher Realms (gnas-lung-la'ang cho-ga rgyas-pa). In his seventieth year he accepted 'Gos-lo gZhon-nu dPal, the author of the Blue Annals as a disciple and granted him the empowerment of the peaceful and wrathful deities according to the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul zhi-khro'i dbang); the longevity-empowerment of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul-gyi tshe-dbang); the exegesis of the Guhyagarbhatantra and its commentary; and an extensive exegesis of the Array of the Path of the Magical Net (man-ngag nam-par bKod-pa, p. 4737) according to his own commentary. He also bestowed on him the transmissions of the Illuminating Lamp of the Fundamental Text (khog-gzhung gsal-sgron. P. 4739); the Forty-Chapter Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul bzhi-bcu-pa. NGB. Vol.14); the Eighty-Chapter Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul brgyad-bcu-pa. T. 834) and the Superior Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul bla-ma. T. 837).

'Gos Lotsawa gZhon-nu dPal:

'Gos gZhon-nu dPal (1392-1481) was a student of Karma-pa V, De-bzhin gShegs-pa, rNgog Byang-chub dPal, and the great paṇḍita Vanaratna. He corrected and retranslated the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti (T. 360), the Guhyagarbha, and other texts.[3] He received the “distant lineage” from sGrol-chen Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen, and so became a master and lineage-holder of the rNying-ma school.

He himself said:[4]

“I acquired exceptional devotion towards the tradition renowned as the rNying-ma-pa school of secret mantras. So, I was never polluted by the defilement of rejecting (true) doctrine.”

His main students were Karma-pa VII, Chos-grags rGya-mtsho and Zhva-dmar-pa IV, Chos-kyi Grags-pa, the latter being the principal lineage-holder.

Zhva-dmar-pa IV, Chos-kyi Grags-pa (1453-1525):

A native of Tre-shod Khang-dmar, he studied the tantras of the Ancient and New Translation Schools under 'Gos Lotsawa gZhon-nu dPal, and conferred the former on Zur-pa Rin-chen Phun-tshogs of 'Bri-gung.

'Bri-gung Rin-chen Phun-tshogs:

Rin-chen Phun-tshogs from 'Bri-gung sKu-gnyer-sgang mastered both the transmitted precepts (bka'-ma). exemplified by the mdo-rgyud-sems-sum: and the treasures (gter-ma) associated with the Eight Transmitted Precepts (bka'-brgyad); the Four-part Innermost Spirituality (snying-thig ya-bzhi): and the Earlier and Later Treasure-troves (gter-kha gong-'og).[5] In accord with the tradition of the mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dBang-rgyal, his custom was to disclose the central points by means of the transmitted precepts, and to adorn them with the esoteric gYung-ston rDo-rje dPalof the treasures.[6]

From him, the lineage descended through:

- Rang-grol Nyi-zla Sangs-rgyas
- Tshe-dbang Nor-rgyas, a master of the 'Khon family;

- 'Khon-ston dPal-'byor Lhun-grub (the former's son).

'Khon-ston dPal-'byor Lhun-grub (1561-1637): dPal-'byor Lhun-grub studied the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayatantra, its commentary composed by gYung-aton-pa, and the other commentaries of the Magical Net cycle, such as kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's phyogs-bcu mun-sel under his father, and in consequence of his learning in this cycle, he was regarded as an emanation of sGro-phug-pa. He instructed O-rgyan bsTan-'dzin, the doctrine-master of Brag-ana and Zur Chos-dbyings Rang-grol. The former composed a memorandum of the first five chapters of the Guhyagarbha according to gYung-ston-pa's Commentary (gYung-'grel). Late in life, dPal-'byor Lhun-grub instructed Dalai lama V at his retreat in Pha-vang-kha.

Zur-chen Chos-dbyinga Rang-grol (1604-1669):

He was the son of Zur-chen gZhon-nu Don-grub and a direct descendant of the Zur lineage. From dPal-'byor Lhun-grub he received in particular two daily sessions of instruction which combined the Guhyagarbha, the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā. P. 4718), and the Tibetan commentary by gYung-ston-pa (bod-'grel gYung-tik. NMKMG. Vol. 28). He composed a memorandum of the teaching he had received on the first five chapters. In 1622 he studied kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's commentary on the Guhyagarbha—phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Then, in 1624, Chos-dbyings Rang-grol expounded the Guhyagarbha to rDor-brag Rig'dzin III Ngag-gi dBang-po[7] and others at the seminary of rTses-thang, where he definitively established its exegesis, and, to sTag-bla Padmamati of Kah-thog,[8] he taught kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's commentary—phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Padmamati, in turn, offered this exegetical transmission to Lho-brag gSungs-sprul, ensuring its future continuity.[9] Late in life, Chos-dbyings Rang-grol lived in Gung-thang, where he instructed gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub[10] in the Guhyagarbha. Dalai Lama V also Instructed Phrin-las Lhun-grub in accordance with the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭikā. P. 4718), and gYung-ston-pa's Commentary (gYune-tik, NMKMG. Vol. 28).

The “distant lineage” therefore continued from:

- Zur Chos-dbyings Rang-grol and Dalai Lama V;
- gNyos-ston gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub;
- Lo-chen Chos-rgyal bsTan-'dzin.

From this time on, the momentum of this Central Tibetan exegetical tradition has continued without Interruption, owing to gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub's two sons, Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gLing-pa 'Gyur-med rDo-rje (1646-1714) and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717). from whom a great many lineages spread forth, emphasising the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

It was gYung-ston-pa's commentary which picked up the Mahāyoga themes of the Guhyagarbhatantra. and gave vitality to subsequent generations of scholars within the lineage of transmitted precepts, Lo-chen

Dharmaśrī in particular.

[2]:

Sa-bzang Mati Pan-chen was a leading Sanskritist, who made the final revisions of the Kālacakratantra. He also wrote several influential commentaries on philosophical works. See G. Roerich, Blue Annals. pp. 776 & 1045-6.

[3]:

'Gos Lotsawa, deb-ther sngon-po, stod-cha. p. 136. (G. Roerich. Blue Annals. p. 104.). states that he had in his possession the remaining fragments of the Sanskrit manuscript for the Guhyagarbha.

[4]:

'Gos Lotsawa, deb-ther sngon-po, stod-cha. p. 194; G. Roerich, Blue Annals, p. 153

[5]:

Among the gter-ma cycles there are diverse collections based on the unified form of the eight meditational deities known as the Eight Transmitted Precepts (bka'-brgyad). Some of these have been enumerated above, p. 146, note 74. See also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, passim. The Four-part Innermost Spirituality (snying-thig ya-bzhi) comprising 13 volumes of the esoteric instructional class of the Great Perfection (man-ngag-gi sde) was compiled by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa. It includes the texts of the Indian and Tibetan oral tradition which he received (bi-ma snying-thig. vols. 3-6, mkha'-gro snying-tig. vols. 10-11) and his own gter-ma cycles known as bla-ma yanz-thiz (vols. 1-2), mkha'-gro yang-tig (vols. 7-9, and zab-mo yang-tig (vols. 12-13). The Earlier And later Treasure-troves (gter-kha gong-'og) are those discoveries of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'Od-zer (1136-1204) and Gu-ru Chos-dbang (1212-1270) respectively.

[6]:

mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dBang-rgyal (1487-1543) was an important figure in the lineage of transmitted precepts, and also the gter-ston who discovered an important work entitled bka'-dus phyi-ma rig-'dzin yongs-'dus-kyi chos-skor gsol-'debs le'u bdun-ma'i sgrub-thabs (RTD. vols. 6, pp. 123-140, 11, pp. 1-112, 30, pp. 61-227). His major treatise on the integration of monastic, bodhisattva and mantra vows, the sdom-gsum rnam-par nges-pa'i bstan-bcos (NMKMG. Vol 37), has been highly influential within the rNying-ma tradition.

[7]:

In the seventeenth century it was this figure who reestablished the monastery of rDo-rje Brag at its present location in dBus after that community had endured a long period of persecution at the hands of the governor of gTsang, Tshe-brtan rDo-rje. On this dispute, see NSTB, Book 2,

[8]:

sTag-bla Padmamati of Kah-thog was an Important figure in East Tibet, particularly influential in connection with the lineage of the gter-ston Zhig-po gLing-pa. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. p. 422.

[9]:

The Lho-brag gSung-sprul II, Tshul-khrims rDo-rje (1598-1669) was an emanation of the buddha-speech of Padma gLing-pa (1U50-1521). See NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 5. PP. 422, 501.

[10]:

On gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub (1611-1662). see NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 5. PP. 486-489.

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Vairocana translated master Sūryaprabhāsiṃha's Extensive Commentary the Secret Nucleus (Śrīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścayaavyākhyāṇaṭīkā. P. 21719) at the Byams-chen temple of 'O-rdu in Khams and he expounded it there. It was Kah-thog-pa Dam-pa bDe-gshegs, however, who originally made the teaching of the Ancient Translation School well-known in that region.

Kah-thog-pa Dam-pa bDe-gshegs (1122-1192):

A maternal cousin of Phag-mo-gru-pa and a native of Bu-'bur-sgang in mDo-khams, Kah-thog-pa studied the Guhyagarbha. the Mental Class, and so on, under 'Dzam-ston 'Gro-ba'i mGon-po, a student of Zur sGro-phug-pa. Dalai Lama V also states in his Record of 163 Teachings Received (Inga-pa chen-po'i gsan-yig) that Kah-thog-pa met sGro-phug-pa in person. Kah-thog-pa also studied the exegesis of the Illuminating Lamp (khoe-gzhune gsal-sgron. P. 4739) under dPal-gyi dBang-phyug of La-stod. In 1159, at Kah-• thog, on a site which resembled the letter KA, he founded the temple of Kah-thog. There, to students from A-mdo, Tsha-ba-rong, Mustang, and Mon, he skillfully revealed the Great Perfection and the Guhyagarbhatantra (T. 832), including all its major and minor Indian and Tibetan commentaries and texts, all according to the Zur tradition. In addition, he expounded the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (Mam-doal sgyu-'phrul drva-ba. NGB. Vol. 15, T. 360) and other tantras. In this way, he laid the foundation for the teaching of the secret mantras in the province of mDo-khams.

The Khams lineage beginning from Kah-thog-pa continued through:

- gTsang-ston-pa;

- Byams-pa 'bum;
- sPyan-snga Mang-phu-ba bSod-nams 'Bum-pa;
- dBu-'od Ye-shes 'Bum;
- Byang-chub dPal-ba;
- bSod-nams bZang-po;
- Kun-dga' 'Bum-pa;
- dBang-phyug dPal-ba;
- bLo-gros 'Bum-pa;
- bLo-gros Seng-ge;
- Byang-chub bLo-gros;
- Byang-chub Seng-ge;
- Byang-chub rGyal-mtshan;
- mKhas-grub Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan.

At Kah-thog, the “distant lineage” of the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum was propagated during the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries, in i.e., the period between the greatness of 'Ug-pa-lung and the rise of the later monastic centres in Central Tibet.

mKhas-grub Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan:

Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan, the learned and accomplished master of Bu-'bor, was a student of Byang-chub rGyal-mtshan and Bra'o Chos-'bum. He reclarified the root-text and commentaries of the Guhyagarbhatantra In Khams.

His compositions included:

- a Commentary on the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi-khro'i 'grel-pa);
- a commentary, outline and synopsis of the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po-la 'grel-pa / sa-bcad / bsdus-don);
- a Commentary and Annotations the Array of the Path of the Magical Net (lam rnam-bkod-la ti-ka-dang mchan-bu);
- Annotations the sPar-khab Commentary and the Innermost Point (spar-khab-dang thugs-thig-la mchan-bu);
- a Commentary on the Clarification of Commitments entitled the Clear Mirror (dam-tshig gsal-bkra-la 'grel-pa gsal-ba'i me-long);
- the Text on the Means for Assuming the Mudrās Of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi-khro'i phyag-rgya bcings-thabs-kyi yi-ge);
- the Commentary on Dam-pa Rin-po-che's General Exposition of the Vehicles (dam-pa rin-po-che'i theg-pa-spyi-bcing-gi 'grel-pa);
- and the Detailed Exposition of the Feast-offering (tshogs-kyi 'khor-lo'i rnam-bshad).[1]

Among Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan's students, Kha-ba dKar-po-ba Nam-mkha' rGya-mtsho also composed commentaries on the Guhyagarbha and the Array of the Path of the Magical Net (lam rnam-bkod).[2]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The commentaries by Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan are not presently available. For more details of his life, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP. 443-445.

[2]:

The texts are not presently available. On the lineages of Kah-thog monastery in general, see H. Elmer and P. Tsering, "Abte und Lehrer von Kah-thog..."; and "A List of Abbots of Kah-thog Monastery..."; also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP' 430451.

12. The resurgence of the bka'-ma lineage in Central Tibet

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Rig-'dzin gTer-Mag gLing-pa:

Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gLing-pa (1646-1713) from Dar-rgyas Chos-gling in Gra-nang, was the son of gSang-bdag Phrin-las Lhun-grub. His studies of the doctrine covered all extant transmitted precepts of the Ancient Translation School, including the cycle of the Magical Net. In his thirteenth year, he memorised the Guhyagarbhatantra and received its oral exegeses from his father. Later, he mastered the scriptures of the gNubs tradition, the Zur tradition and of Rong-zom Paṇḍita; bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i Ral-gri's Definitive Order of the Tantrapīṭakas (bcom-ldan ral-gri'i spyi-*nam*): and other texts. In particular, he is said to have obtained unimpeded powers of intellectual analysis by diligently investigating the scriptures of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa.

gTer-bdag gLing-pa restored the "distant lineage of transmitted precepts", exemplified by the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum, at sMin-grol-gling, which he himself founded in 1659 at a time of decline in Central Tibet.[1] Indeed, It is due to his efforts and to those of his successors that the "distant lineage" has continued as a living tradition. He transmitted the Collected Tantras (rGyud-'bum). to Dalai Lama V, Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho, Rig-'dzin IV Padma Phrin-las of rDo-rje Brag, rDzogs-chen Padma Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med Theg-mchog bTan-'dzin, Kah-thog rGyal-sras bSod-nams lDe'u-btsan, and a multitude of other students from Tibet and Khams.[2] The closest students were his younger brother Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, his sons Padma 'Gyur-med rGya-mtsho, Zhabs-drung Yid-bzhin Legs-grub, Drin-chen Rin-chen rNam-rgyal; and his daughter, rJe-btsun Mi-gyur dPal-sgron.

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī:

The translator Dharmaśrī (1654-1718) was fully ordained by Dalai Lama V, and given instruction by his elder brother, gTer-bdag gLing-pa, in the works of kLong-chen-pa, Rong-zom-pa, and those of the Zur lineage. He received the entire mdo-sgyu-sems gsum and their root—the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa (rnying-ma rgyud-'bum). Subsequently, he taught the Guhyagarbhatantra on behalf of about sixty members of the community at sMin-grol-gling, and eight times he conferred the empowerment of the peaceful and wrathful deities of the Magical Net. In order to perpetuate the distant lineage of transmitted precepts and close lineage of treasures he composed the eighteen volumes of his Collected Works (bka'-bum), including commentaries on the mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa

and the Magical Net. When, in particular, he heard his brother deliver an oral exegesis of the Guhyagarbha which combined the sPar-khab Commentary (Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājāṭikā, P. 4718) and gYung-ston-pa's Commentary (gYung-tik, NMKMG. Vol. 28), he understood the overt and hidden meanings of that tantra and composed a voluminous series of texts, collectively known as the sgu-'phrul skor-gyi yig-cha. NMKMG. Vols. 11-12, 32-34). Among them are two authoritative commentaries on it according to the "distant lineage"—dgal gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi rgyal-po sgyu-'phrul dra-ba spyi-don-gyi sgo-nas gtan-la 'babs-par 'byed-pa'i legs-bshad gsang-bdag zhal-lung. NMKMG. Vols. 33-34, pp. 881, which appraises the role of this tantra within the rNying-ma tradition as a whole, and the dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi 'grel-pa gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. NMKMG. Vol. 32. pp. 365, which provides definitive readings for the root-verses themselves.[3] There are also extant commentaries on the latter by his student, O-rgyan Chos-'phel (b. 1676). viz. the dpal-gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan-gyi spyi-don yan-gyi bshad-pa'i zin-bris bla-ma'i man-ngag rin-chen 'phreng-ba which was composed in 1730, and the dpal-gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi rgyal-po gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan-gyi bsdu-don sa-bcad nor-bu'i 'phreng-ba (NMKMG. Vol. 32).[4]

In sMin-grol-gling, the "distant lineage" was transmitted in the following succession:

- Lo-chen Dharmaśrī;
- rGyal-sras Rin-chen rNam-rgyal;
- mKhan-chen O-rgyan bsTan-'dzin rDo-rje;
- Khri-chen Phrin-las rNam-rgyal;
- Khri Padma dBang-rgyal;
- Khri Sangs-rgyas Kun-dga';
- mDo-sngags bsTan-'dzin Nor-bu;
- 'Gyur-med Phan-bde'i 'Od-zer;
- bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje.

Among them, 'Gyur-med Phan-bde'i 'Od-zer, c. 1924, composed a commentary on the Guhyagarbhatantra entitled zab-don sgo-brgya 'byed-pa'i lde'u-mig (NMKMG. Vol. 36).[5]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

In the seventeenth century, and Increasingly in the eighteenth century, the propagation of the bka'-ma lineage was concentrated in east Tibet. When the lineage had all but disappeared in the central region, gTer-bdag gLing-pa and his brother Lo-chen Dharmaśrī became responsible for its restitution. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. pp. 498-506.

[2]:

On Dalai bLa-ma V, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP. 424-425. Pt. 6. pp. 614-620; and on Rig-'dzin IV, ibid.. Pt. 5. PP. 477-479.

[3]:

These texts have both been repeatedly consulted in the course of the present research, the first for background information and the second for its presentation of the Tibetan text.

[4]:

These commentaries on the gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan are published in Commentaries on the Guhyagarbha Tantra and other rare Nyingma Texts from the Library at Dudjom Rinpoche, vol. 1.

[5]:

He is an important recent figure in the lineage of the transmitted precepts and a teacher of bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rje. See NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 6. p. 499,

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From the time of Dalai Lama V, the “distant lineage” was extensively propagated throughout Khams. After the depredations of the Dzun-gar-pa Incursion and during the era of 'Jigs-med gLing-pa,[1] the main centre of activity for the rNying-ma tradition in fact moved eastwards to Khams, where the sMin-grol-gling lineages stemming from rGyal-sras Rin-chen rNam-rgyal and mKhan-chen O-rgyan bsTan-'dzin were propagated in the Khams-pa monasteries of Kah-thog, dPal-yul, Zhe-chen' and rDzogs-chen, spreading as far as rGyal-mo-rong in eastern Khams and the mGo-log region of A-mdo. In these regions, the “distant lineage” of the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum continued without decline until recent times.

Kah-thog:

The monastery of Kah-thog rDo-rJe gDan, a stronghold of the rNying-ma teaching in Khams from the twelfth century onwards, was expanded in the sixteenth century by Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rDo-rJe and kLong-gsal sNying-po. The latter's student, bSod-nams lde'u-btsan, received the Central Tibetan lineage from gTer-bdag gLing-pa of sMin-grol-gling, and revitalised the exegetical traditions of Kah-thog. Through his successive incarnations, beginning with Dri-med Zhing-skyong mGon-po, and through the efforts of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbanz Nor-bu (1698-1755) and dGe-brtse Paṇḍita, 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub, this lineage has continued down to recent teachers, e.g. Kah-thog Si-tu II Kun-gzigs Chos-kyi rGya-mtsho (1880-1925), mKhan-chen Rig-'dzin Ngag-dbang dPal-bzang (1879-1941), mKhan-po Nus-ldan, mKhan-po 'Byor-ldan, and Bya-bral Sangs-rgyas rDo-rje. Among them, Kah-thog dGe-brtse Paṇḍita, 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub catalogued the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa,[2] and in c. 1764 composed a commentary on the Guhyagarbhatantra, entitled gsangs-sngags nang-gi lam-rim rgya-cher 'grel-pa sangs-rgyas gnyis-pa'i dgongs-rgyan (NMKMG. Vol. 35).

rDzogs-chen:

Padma Rig-'dzin of rDzogs-chen (1625-1697) went to mDo-khams at the behest of Dalai Lama V. and founded the retreat centre of bSam-gtan Chos-gling at Ru-dam sKyid-khram in 1685. The seat was maintained by his students, gTer-chen Nyi-ma Grags-pa, dPon-slob Nam-mkha' Od-gsal, and Zhe-chen Rab-'byams bsTan-pa'i rGyal-mtshan, and thereafter by his successive incarnations—rDzogs-chen II 'Gyur-med Theg-mchog bsTan-'dzin, rDzogs-chen III, rDzogs-chen IV Mi-'gyur Nam-mkha'i rDo-rje (b. 1793), rDzogs-chen V Thub-bstan Chos-kyi rDo-rje (b. 1872), rDzogs-chen VI 'Jigs-bral Byang-chub rDo-rje, and now in India by rDzogs-chen VII. During the lifetime of rDzogs-chen IV, rGyal-sras gZhan-phan mTha'-yas or sKu-zhabs dGe-mang (b. 1800) founded the Śrīsiṃha [Śrīsiṃha?] College at rDzogs-chen and, at the request of sMin-gling Khri-chen Sangs-rgyas Kun-dga' and dPal-sprul Padma dBang-rgyal, he established a compendium of the “distant lineage of transmitted precepts”, including the cycle of the Magical Net, in about ten volumes. His incarnation, rGya-kong mKhan-po gZhan-phan Chos-kyi sNang-ba, alias mKhan-po gZhan-dga' (1871-1927), wrote commentaries on thirteen major texts, including the Guhyagarbha, the latter (entitled sgyu-phrul drya-ba'i rgyud-kyi mchan-'grel nyi-zla snying-po) being a repetition of the interlinear sections of kLong-chen Rab" byams-pa's phvogs-bcu mun-sel.[3]

Zhe-chen bsTan-gnyis Dar-rgyas gLing:

This monastery was founded in 1735 as a branch of rDzogs-chen by Zhe-chen Rab-'byams II 'Gyur-med Kun-bzang rNam-rgyal. The seat was maintained by his successive incarnations, including Zhe-chen Rab-'byams III Rig-'dzin dPal-'byor rGya-mtsho (1771-1809), Zhe-chen Rab-'byams IV 'Gyur-med mThu-stobs rNam-rgyal, and by the Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab I gSang-sngags bsTan-'dzin and rGyal-tshab 'Gyur-ned Padma rNam-rgyal (1871-1927).

dPal-yul:

In 1665. Rig-'dzin Kun-bzang Shes-rab founded the doctrinal centre of rNam-rgyal Byang-chub gLing at dPal-yul, where his successors upheld his teaching tradition, emphasising the treasure-cycle of Ratna gLing-pa. At dPal-yul, 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po and mChog-'gyur gLing-pa encouraged rGya-sprul Padma mDo-sngags bsTan-'dzin to institute the annual sgrub-chen ceremony associated with the twenty-seven extant maṇḍalas of the “distant lineage”, and he founded the branch-monastery of Dar-thang mDo-sngags bShad-sgrub gLing in A-mdo. The lineage of dPal-yul is now maintained in South India by the incarnation of dPal-yul Padma Nor-bu 'Jam-dpal Grub-pa'i bLo-gros. The extant texts constituting the “distant lineage of transmitted precepts” were republished in some twenty volumes by O-rgyan mDo-sngags Chos-kyi Nyi-ma, and these have been reprinted twice in India by bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rDo-rJe (b. 1904). The second of these Indian editions, the rNying-ma bka'-ma rgyas-pa comprises 40 volumes, of which volumes 21-40 include newly incorporated commentarial literature within the original 175 collection.

'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po:

'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po (1820-1892) from gTer-lung Dil-mgo, sDe-dge district, mDo-khams, was directly responsible, along with 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul and mChog-'gyur gLing-pa, for the resurgence of the

rNying-ma and other traditions in nineteenth century Kham. In his twenty-first year he was fully ordained by Rig-dzin bZang-po, a preceptor of sMin-grol-gling, and from the Sa-skyapa rDo-rje Rin-chen and others he received the vows of the cultivation of the enlightened attitude.[4] He studied all the existing exegetical traditions of Sūtras, treatises and tantras including the Guhyagarbha over thirteen years, and received the transmissions of the bKa'-gyur, the Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa (rnying-ma rgyud-'bum), and the bsTan-gyur. In particular, he received teaching on the peaceful and wrathful deities of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul zhi-khro), along with its empowerment, from 'Gyur-med mThu-stobs rNam-rgyal of Zhe-chen. His foremost students were 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, Kah-thog Si-tu II Chos-kyi rGya-mtsho (1880-1925), A-'dzom 'Brug-pa (1842-1924), rDo-grub III 'Jigs-med bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma (1865-1926), gTer-ston bSod-rgyal (1856-1926), mKhan-po Kun-bzang dPal-ldan, dPal-yul Padma Nor-bu 'Jam-dpal Grub-pa'i rDo-rje, and rDzogs-chen V Thub-bstan Chos-kyi rDo-rJe.[5] Among them, rDo-grub III 'Jigs-med bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma composed a commentary on the Guhyagarbhatantra, entitled dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i rgyud-kyi spyi-don nyung-ngu'i ngag-gis rnam-par 'byed-pa rin-chen mdzod-kyi lde-mig, pp. 244, which has an elaborate discussion on the meditative techniques. The text was written down by gTer-ston bSod-rgyal at rDo-grub Chen's dictation. In the Guhyagarbha Temple at rDo-grub Monastery, the exegetical tradition of this Tantra according to the "distant lineage" was taught during winter seminars.[6]

Mi-pham rNam-rgyal (1846-1912):

A native of 'Ju, near sDe-dge, he received instruction in this tradition primarily from 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dBang-po and dPal-sprul Rin-po-che (1808-1887).[7] Renowned for his analyses of Buddhist Sūtra and Tantra-based philosophy, his writings include an important commentary on kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's phyogs-bcu mun-sel, entitled spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po, NMKMG. Vol. 27, ff. 137. which examines the Guhyagarbha in terms of the ten aspects of mantra.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, p. 30, note 63.

[2]:

See above, p. 31.

[3]:

On this mchan-'grel. which is still highly regarded in rDzogs-chen monastery, see H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery. p. 213, note 8.

[4]:

This is the bodhisattva vow (byang-chub sems-dpa'i sdom-pa) maintained by all Buddhist traditions in Tibet. Within the rNying-ma-pa tradition, the rites for the conferral of this vow are found in NMKMG. vol

1. The author of phyogs-bcu mun-sel. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa himself gathered together three such traditions, namely, the tradition of Mañjuśrī via Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, the tradition of Maitreya via Asaṅga and Yaśubandhu, and the tradition of Mañjuśrī via Nāgārjuna and/ or Śāntideva. See the Gsan yig of Gter-bdag-glin-pa, pp. 15-16.

[5]:

On these figures, see T. Thondup, *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa*. *passim*.

[6]:

There is a good account of rDo-grub Ill's activities in T. Thondup, *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa*. pp. 98102. 121.

[7]:

On dPal-sprul Rin-po-che, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, p. 694; T. Thondup, *up. cit.*, p. 100. He is the author of a celebrated commentary on preliminary meditation practices, the Kun-bzang bla-ma'i zhal-lung. on which see the French translation by Christian Bruyat et. al., and excerpts in Khetsun Sangpo Rin-bo-chay and J. Hopkins, *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*.

14. The Treasure-Doctrines associated with the Guhyagarbha

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In addition to these holders of the “distant lineage of transmitted precepts” (ring-brgyud bka'-ma), who disseminated and composed commentaries on the Guhyagarbha, we must also take note of the various gter-ma traditions inspired by the original tantra-text. Canonical support for the practice of concealing and rediscovering texts in the form of treasure-doctrines (gter-ma) is found in many Sūtras and Tantras.[1] The rationale is that, whereas the vitality of the distant lineage is inevitably weakened by the vicissitudes of time, the purity of the ancient translations is said to be retained in the “close lineage of treasures” (nye-brgyud gter-ma), a series of doctrines which are revealed or discovered anew in each generation and which have a more immediate impact. Such doctrines are classified as earthtreasures (sa-gter). treasures of intention (dgongs-gter). pure visions (dag-s nang), recollected treasures (rjes-dran-gyi gter), or rediscovered treasures (yang-gter). Among these, the earth treasures are primarily associated with Padmasambhava who transmitted a mass of teachings on Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga to his consort Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal.[2] She is said to have retained these, rearranging them on five kinds of yellow scroll (symbolising the five buddha-families) in the symbolic script of the Ḍākinīs, and to have inserted them in various sealed treasure-chests, to be rediscovered in future generations. Padmasambhava, King Khri-srong lDe-btsan, Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal, as well as Vimalamitra, Vairocana, gNubs Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes, Nam-mkha'i sNying-po, gNyags

Jñānakumāra, sNa-nam rDo-rje bDud-'joms, Nyang-ban Ting-'dzin bZang-po and others are similarly regarded as concealers of gter-ma. while the future rediscoverers are their emanations.[3]

Concerning treasures of intention and pure visions, it is said that owing to past aspirations bodhisattvas continually hear the sound of the doctrine in the elements and in the sounds of wild beasts. Buddhas and bodhisattvas may reveal themselves in visions and teach the doctrine, as it says in the Āryasarvapuṇyasamuccayasamādhisūtra (T. 134):[4]

O Vimalatejas! the great Bodhisattvas who are desirous of the doctrine and who are endowed with perfect aspiration and reverence, will behold the visage of the Transcendent Lord Buddha and hear his doctrine even though they reside in another region of the universe.

This gter-ma literature also developed a synthetic tendency, corresponding to the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum of the “distant lineage”. In general the major discoveries should include texts concerning Guru Padmasambhava, Great Perfection and Mahākāruṇika (bla-rdzogs-thugs-gsum), and the foremost of these should also contain texts concerning the Eight Transmitted Precepts, the Gathering of Intentions, and Vajrakīla (bka'-dgongs-phur-gsum).

Among the treasure-finders (gter-ston) there are some whose discoveries include texts associated with the maṇḍala of the hundred a peaceful and wrathful deities, which is that of the Guhyagarbhatantra and the cycle of the Magical Net. The most notable of these are mentioned below, on the basis of their biographies recorded in 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul's nineteenth century compilation, the Lives of the Hundred Treasure-finders: a Beauteous Rosary of Precious Beryl (gter-ston brgya-rtsa'i rnam-thar rin-chen bai-durya'i phreng-mdzes).[5]

Yar-rje O-rgyan gLing-pa (1323-c. 1360):

Behind Shel-brag in Yar-lung, in a cave on Padma brTsegs-pa Rock, once frequented by Padmasambhava, there were natural stone images of the peaceful and wrathful deities, guarded by an image of Rāhula. From the heads and other body-parts of that image of Rāhula, O-rgyan gLing-pa extracted several cycles of texts. From the throat specifically he discovered the Gathering of the Transmitted Precepts the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi-khro bka'-'dus).[6]

Karma gLing-pa:

Karma gLing-pa (c. 1327-1387) extracted from Mt. sGam-po-gdar in Dvags-po the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities: the Natural Liberation of Intention (zhi-khro dgongs-pa rang-grol. RTD. Vol. 4. PP. 1-281), the Great Compassionate One: the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of Padma (thugs-rje chen-po padma zhi-khro),[7] and other treasures. He gave the last mentioned to fourteen students, but conferred the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities: the Natural Liberation Intention (zhi-khro dgongs-pa rang-grol) on his son Nyi-zla Chos-rje alone; demanding that for three generations it should be transmitted to only a single person. Then, it was disseminated by Nam-mkha' Chos-kyi rGya-mtsho, the third generation successor, and the lineage of its empowerment, transmission and guidance has continued

until the present. One section of it, the Great Liberation by Hearing during the Intermediate State (bar-do thos-grol chen-po), is known in its English translations as the Tibetan Book of the Dead.[8]

Shes-rab 'Od-zer (b. 1518):

He discovered the Point at Liberation: the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (grol-tig zhi-khro, RTD. vols. 4, 11),[9] the practice of which was emphasised at his monastery in 'Phyong-rgyas dPal-ri.

'Ja'-tshon sNying-po (1585-1656):

Among the many treasures which he discovered, especially in the Kong-po region, there is the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities: the nucleus of Definitive Meaning (zhi-khro nges-don snying-po. JTPD. Vol. 4).[10]

bDud-'dul rDo-rje (1615-1672):

He obtained the cycles of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of Magical Net and of the Eight Transmitted Precepts along with the protectors of these transmitted precepts (sgyu-'phrul zhi-khro dang bka'-brgyad skor bka'-srung bcas), which had been extracted from Mount gNam-lcags 'Bar-ba in sPu-bo by the yogin Dung-phreng-can.[11]

gNam-chos Mi-'gyur rDo-rje (17th century):

His prolific discoveries ammounting to twenty-three volumes include the gnam-chos zhi-khro. RTP. Vol. 64.[12]

mChog-'gyur gLing-pa (1829-1870):

mChog-'gyur gLing-pa received from 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul most of the rNying-ma traditions, including the peaceful and wrathful deities of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul zhi-khro). He and 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse-i dBang-po were both endowed with seven successions, which concerned the “distant lineage” of the mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum, the treasures, and pure visions.[13] Among his profound treasures, there are some such as the Great Compassionate One: the Magical Net of the Lotus (thugs-rje chen-po padma sgyu-'phrul drya-ba),[14] discovered from mKha'-'gro 'Bum-rdzong, and the Magical Net according to the Seven Profound Cycles (zab-bdun sgyu-'phrul),[15] which uphold the terminology and philosophical structures of the “distant lineage”.[16]

'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po:

He was a prolific discoverer of treasures, including the Cycle of the Magical Net of the Three Roots (rtsa-gsum sgyu-'phrul drya-ba'i skor, RTD. Vol. 7)[17] which he extracted from Si-ngu gYü-mtsho. Also, in a pure vision, while residing at rDzong-shod bDe-gshegs 'Dus-pa, he visited the Stūpa of Saṅkarakūṭa where he was empowered and instructed by Padmasambhava's eight emanations into the Eight Transmitted Precepts great Attainment (sgrub-chen bka'-brgyad) and the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul zhi-khro).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For example, it says in the Āryasarvapūṇyasamuccayasamādhisūtra (T. 134. P. 802. Vol. 32. p. 140.2.1/2): O Vimalatejas! the doctrinal treasures

of bodhisattvas, great spiritual warriors who desire the doctrine, have been inserted in mountains, ravines, and woods. Dhāranis and e limitless approaches to the doctrine, which are set down in books, will also come into their hands.

And:

For one whose aspiration is perfect the doctrine will emerge from the midst of the sky, and from walls and trees, even though no buddha be present.

[2]:

On Ye-shes Tsho-rgyal. see the biography by sTag-sham Nus-ldan rDo-rje (b. 1655), translated in K. Dowman, *Sky Dancer: also The Life and Liberation Padmasambhabya*. 542ff. and passim: NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. PP. 465ff.. Pt. 6, p. 519.

[3]:

On these figures see Yeshe Tshogyal, *The Life and Liberation Padmasambhava*: T. Thondup, *The Tantric Tradition the Nyingmapa*: NSTB, Book 2. passim. For Nyang-ban Ting-'dzin bZang-po and his role in the lineage of the Great Perfection, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 215-216. Future gter-ston or discoverers of treasure-doctrines are considered to be emanations of these masters. See the biographies in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6.

[4]:

Peking bka'-'gyur. Vol. 32, P. 802, pp. 140.1.7-140.2.1.

[5]:

'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, gter-ston brgya-rtsa'i rnam-thar rin-chen bal-durya'i phreng-mdzes. RTD. Vol. 1. pp. 291-759.

[6]:

This text is no longer available, but a rediscovered treasure based on it, the bka'-'dus snying-po mdor-bsdus skor by 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po, is in RTD. Vol. 23. PP. 209-429. On O-rgyan gLing-pa in general, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 557-563.

[7]:

On the first of these texts, see above p. 14, note 1. The thugs-rje chen-po padma zhi-khro is no longer available. However, there is a rediscovered version (yang-gter) of a treasure by this name, RTD. Vol. 34, pp. 235-432. the original discoverer of which was a descendent of Karma gLing-pa, named Nyi-ma Seng-ge. The rediscoverer was 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po.

[8]:

See above, p. 13, note 1.

[9]:

On Shes-rab 'Od-zer, see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, gter-ston brgya-rtsa'i rnam-thar. pp. 135a, 6-137a, 6.

[10]:

On 'Ja-tshon sNying-po, see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, op, cit.. pp. 88a.1-91a.2; NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 598-604. His collected works, the 'ja-tshon pod-drug, now comprise seven volumes.

[11]:

NL. On bDud-'dul rDo-rje, see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, op. cit.. pp. 145a.3-148a.2; NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 604-610.

[12]:

On Mi-'gyur rDo-rje, see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, op. cit.. pp. 211a.6-213a.3. He received fifteen volumes of collected visionary teachings, known as "celestial doctrines" (gnam-chos) from the age of twelve until his death at the age of twenty-four.

[13]:

These seven successions (bka'-babs bdun) comprise transmitted precepts (bka'). earth treasures (sa-rter). reconcealed treasures (yang-gter). Intentional treasures (dgongs-gter), recollected treasures (rjes-su dran-pa'i gter). pure visions (dag-s nang). and aural transmissions (snyan-brgyud). See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, p. 651.

[14]:

See CLTC. Vols. 11-12, RTD. Vol. 39

[15]:

See CLTC. Vols. 14-19, RTD. passim.

[16]:

On mChog-'gyur gLlng-pa, see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, op. cit.. pp. 177a.4-184b.j; NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 646-658. His collected rediscovered teachings, the mchog-gling gter-chos. occupy thirty volumes. See the bibliography for details.

[17]:

RTD. Vol. 7, pp. 49-90. On the life of 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dBang-po, refer to 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, op. cit.. pp. 185a.4-195a.2;

15. Ten Philosophical Topics of the Guhyagarbha

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The philosophical content of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra is generally expounded in accordance with the ground, path and result of Mahāyoga, which have been outlined above,[1] and it has also been examined in terms of the three continue (rgyud-gsum).[2] By contrast, the present analysis will seek to examine the Guhyagarbha in terms of the ten practical aspects of mantra (mantradaśatattva), an approach followed by Mi-pham Rin-po-che in his spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po.

These ten aspects are said to be:[3]

A view of the real, determinate conduct, maṇḍala array, successive gradation of empowerment, commitment which is not transgressed, enlightened activity which is displayed, fulfillment of aspiration, unwavering contemplation, offerings which bring the goal to fruition, and mantra recitation accompanied by the seals which bind (the practitioner to realisation).

View (lta-ba), spyi-don, pp. 66-113:

This is generally defined as the intellectual perspective of reality once exaggeration and depreciation have been cut through by means of discriminative awareness (shes-rab). The status of sentient beings is established. in terms of the true establishment of this view, to comprise those of no understanding. those of wrong understanding. and those who do not fully understand genuine reality (i.e.. the adherents of the causal vehicles), as well as those who understand the meanings of discipline. intention. secrecy, and the naturally secret truth (i.e.. the respective adherents of Kriyātantra. Ubhayatantra, Yogatantra and Mahāyogatantra). [4]

In particular the view of Mahāyoga epitomised in this tantra is that phenomenal existence is ascertained to be fundamental reality by means of four axioms. namely, the axiom of the four kinds of realisation (rtogs-pa bzhi), the axiom of the three purities (dag-pa gsum), the axiom of the four modes of sameness (mnyam-bzhi), and the axiom of supreme Identity (bdag-nyid chen-po).

1) The four kinds of realisation are indicated in Ch. 11, 2: The single basis and the manner of seed-syllables, The blessing and the direct perception: Through (these) four kinds of excellent realisation. All things are the great king, manifestly perfect.

The axiom of the single basis (rgyu gcig-pa) establishes all things to be naturally present and uncreated, that of the manner of seed-syllables

(yig-'bru'i tshul) establishes all things to be an unceasing display of pure appearance, that of blessing or consecration (byin-gyis brlabs-pa) establishes all things as an indivisible essence of uncreated sameness and pure appearance, and that of the direct perception (mngon-sum) establishes all things to be without intellectual characteristics.[5]

2) The axiom of the three purities establishes the containerworld, its sentient contents and the mind-stream as a great purity.[6]

3) The axiom of the four modes of sameness, namely, emptiness, coalescence of appearance & emptiness, freedom from conceptual elaboration and sameness itself, establishes all things subsumed in relative and ultimate truth as a great sameness.[7]

4) The axiom of supreme identity establishes all things to abide primordially in the identity of a single pristine cognition (ye-shes) or mind-as-such (sems-nyid).[8] The ascertainment of this abiding nature (gnas-lugs) is indeed the fundamental view or goal of Mahāyoga, and its logical proof is explored by Mi-pham Rin-po-che in three topics which he outlines as follows:[9]

i) The view of apparitional reality is the view that the container-world and its sentient contents are a great purity in the maṇḍala of supportive buddha-body and supported pristine cognition.

ii) The view of reality itself is that all things are a great indivisible sameness.

iii) The view which beholds Intrinsic awareness is that in which one is to become Individually aware that the superior truth of the indivisibility of purity and sameness is the great buddha-body of reality (mahādharmakāya).

In spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po, pp. 69-107, he sets forth the proof of the view, comprising a proof of the superiority of the mantra view over that of the Sūtras and a proof of sameness, purity and indivisibility with reference to the mantra-view itself. In conclusion (pp. 107-113) he shows how each of the other ten aspects of mantra depends on purity and sameness of view.

Contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin), pp. 113-127:

This is essentially defined as the balanced intelligence abiding one-pointedly with reference to or in harmony with a visualised object, without obscuration or agitation. At the outset, contemplation is attained through appropriate inclination, effort, recollection, awareness of the present, and equanimity. Then, the experience of tranquility (śamatha / zhi-gnas) is refined by nine kinds of skillful means which enable the mind to abide in its natural state, giving rise incidentally to experiences of bliss, radiance and non-conceptualisation.[10]

According to the inner classes of tantra, contemplation specifically refers to the contemplation of the creation stage (bskyed-rim) and the contemplation of the perfection stage (rdzogs-rim). The former has four modes: an extensive one which refines propensities associated with the

four places of birth, develops the five awakenings in life and the four rites of indestructible reality;[11] an intermediate mode which enacts the three rites;[12] an abridged mode which creates the spontaneously perfect contemplation according to Anuyoga;[13] and an extremely abridged mode which applies the instantaneous recollection in accordance with Atiyoga.[14] The latter includes the path of skillful means (thabs-lam) on which the energy channels, currents and seminal points (rtsa-rlung thig-le) in the body are controlled and the coalescent path of liberation (grol-lam) or non-conceptualising yoga. Here, contemplation occurs in three steps, known as the yoga of blessing or devotional meditation, the yoga of the Imaginary or effective meditation, and the yoga of perfection or instantaneous contemplation.

Conduct (spyod-pa). pp. 127-136:

Conduct is essentially defined to Include all activities of body, speech and mind which are to be performed in the application of skillful means (thabs) and discriminative awareness (shes-rab). It is classified into the conduct of discipline on the path of skillful means (thabs-lam brtul-zhugs-kyi spyod-pa) and the conduct of careful restraint on the path of liberation (grol-lam bag-yod-kyi spyod-pa),[15] in periods of meditative absorption, conduct is said to refer to contemplation itself, but in the aftermath of meditation[16] it concerns the phenomenal display which arises before the mind. The particular conduct of Mahāyoga includes the rites of “sexual union” (sbyor-ba) which generate delight and rites of “liberation” (grol-ba), which are the wrathful application of compassion.[17]

Maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor), pp. 136-144:

Maṇḍala is essentially defined as a central deity embodying fundamental reality surrounded by peripheral clusters of deities, or as the basis on which the essential enlightened attributes are apprehended. It is classified according to the maṇḍalas of ground, path and result. the first referring to the primordial presence of the container world and its sentient contents as the supportive deity and supported pristine cognition, the second to the symbolic or illustrative images of meditation and the genuine maṇḍalas of buddha-body, speech and mind, while the third refers to the conclusive result, the “rank of Samantabhadra” whereon buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction.[18]

Empowerment (dbang-bskur), pp. 144-152:

Empowerment is essentially defined as the initial dissipation of stains covering the body, speech and mind and the conferral of mature pristine cognition. It is generally classified into the vase-empowerment ('bum-dbang) which purifies the body and its energy channels into the emanational body (sprul-sku), the secret empowerment (gsang-dbang) which purifies the speech and vital energy into the buddha-body of perfect rapture (longs-spyod rdzogs-pa'i sku), the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition (shes-rab ye-shes-kyi dbang) which purifies the mind and seminal point into the buddha-body of reality (chos-sku); and the empowerment of word and meaning (tshig-don-gyi dbang) which purifies these three in equal proportion into the essential buddha-body (ngo-bo-nyid-kyi sku). According to Mahāyoga in particular, there are three categories of empowerment—beneficence (phan-dbang), ability (nus-pa'i

dbang) and profundity (zab-dbang), the first two of which correspond to the vase-empowerment and the last to the three higher ones.[19]

Commitment (dam-tshig), pp. 152-185:

Commitment is essentially defined as an object not to be transgressed. When classified there are general commitments including the vows of prātimokṣa, the cultivation of enlightened mind (sems-bskyed) and the commitments of the gSar-ma-pa mantra-traditions, and in particular, according to Mahāyoga, there is an enumeration of twenty-eight commitments,[20] or one of five basic and ten ancillary commitments. The five basic ones are not to abandon the unsurpassed, to venerate the bla-ma, not to interrupt the continuity of mantras and seals, to have loving kindness for those entering the genuine path, and not to expound the secret meaning to unworthy recipients. The ten ancillary commitments are not to abandon the five poisons and to gather the five nectars.[21]

Attainment (sgrub-pa), pp. 185-202:

Attainment is essentially defined as the acquisition of supreme and common accomplishments through the extraordinary skillful means of the secret mantras. It is classified according to accomplishments (supreme and common), supports (material sacraments, verbal mantras, mental contemplation, and physical postures), essences (creation and perfection stages), and modes of attainment (ritual service and rites of attainment). In particular, it is classified according to the extraordinary attainments of the feast-offerings (tshogs), whereby male and female yogins attain the rank of the awareness-holders by the four aspects of ritual service and rites of attainment.[22]

Offering (mchod-pa). pp. 202-215:

Offering is essentially defined as the means for venerating and producing delight in the deities because it precedes all virtuous deeds and the attainment of all activities. Offerings are classified into outer offerings of enjoyment (phyi nyer-spyod-kyi mchod-pa), inner offerings of commitment (nang dam-rdzas-kyi mchod-pa), secret offerings of sexual union and “liberation” (gsang-ba sbyor-sgrol-gyi mchod-pa), and real offerings of great sameness (de-kho-na-nyid mnyam-pa chen-po'i mchod-pa). These are integrated in the course of the feast-offering ceremony.[23]

Enlightened Activity (phrin-las). pp. 215-226:

Enlightened activity is essentially defined as the extraordinary action, learned in skillful means, which is expressed for the sake of others through the four immeasurables (tshad-med bzhi).[24] It is classified according to its objects of attainment into supreme and common activities, the former generating the seed of liberation in other minds and the latter manifesting provisional blissful results. Then according to its supports, there are outer activities dependent on external sacraments and inner activities of body, speech and mind. According to its aspects, there are activities of benefit to sentient beings and those which eradicate obstacles, i.e. the four rites of pacification (zhi), enrichment (rgyas), subjugation (dbang) and wrath (drag). According to motivation or attributes, there are common self-centred activities and supreme other-oriented activities. These may be attained through the perfection stage, the creation stage or through the recitation of mantras.[25]

Sealing is essentially defined as the means of resolutely securing the buddha-body, speech, mind and activities. It is classified generally according to the seals of ground, path and result, and in particular according to the seals of the path, which in the case of the creation stage of Mahāyoga include the great-seal of buddha-body (sku phyag-rgya chen-po), the doctrinal-seal of buddha-speech (gsung chos-kyi phyag-rgya), the commitment-seal of buddha-mind (thugs dam-tshig-gi phyag-rgya) and the action-seal of buddha-activity (phrin-las las-kyi phyag-rgya). In the case of the perfection stage, these four seals are secured by means of a female consort (gzungs-ma), by the cultivation of the path, or by the four resultant pristine cognitions.[26] These seals are symbolically made effective by the hand-gestures.[27]

Mantra (sngags). pp. 237-259:

Mantra is essentially defined as the extraordinary skillful means which protects the mind or discriminative awareness.[28] Its topics consist of the syllables, their four kinds of attainment, and their result: The vocalic and consonantal syllables have four modes, according to which they either abide as basic syllables in the body, as the syllables of the divine palace, as the syllables of miraculous emanation, or as syllables of symbolic sound. Their four attainments are associated either with the essential nature of reality, with the nature of apparitional reality, with the consecration of the buddhas, or with their unimpeded potency and force. The result includes provisional and conclusive levels of realisation.[29]

In terms of their practical application, mantras are said to be of three kinds: secret mantras (gsang-sngags), gnostic mantras (rigs-sngags) and retentive mantras (gzungs-sngags), the first so-called because its skillful means is secret, the second because its essence is awareness or pristine cognition, and the third because consecration occurs when it is retained. [30]

In the course of this analysis, Mi-pham Rin-po-che concludes each section with a statement indicating the interrelated nature of these ten aspects.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, pp. 20-25.

[2]:

See above pp. 59-61.

[3]:

'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po. pp. 65-66.

[4]:

The relationship between these qualities and the adherents of the nine vehicles is explored in Chapter Thirteen of phyogs-bcu mun-sel. on the basis of the opening verses of the corresponding chapter of the root-tantra. See phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 13, pp. 440-448. In kLong-chen-pa's view, the naturally secret truth refers to Atiyoga as an extension of Mahāyoga.

[5]:

On these axioms, which form the introductory verses of Chapter Eleven, and their application, see Phyogs-bcu mun-sel. pp. 380.1-384.1: also for a synopsis see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 156aff.

[6]:

This axiom also occurs in Ch. 11. For an explanation see mun-sel, pp. 408.2 ff.

[7]:

Mi-pham Rin-po-che's definition slightly differs from that given by kLong-chen-pa in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 11, pp. 408-409, according to which there are two ordinary axioms of sameness, namely, that all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are the same in their uncreated disposition and relatively the same in the manner of a magical apparition; and two superior axioms, namely that the five components are buddhas and the eight aggregates of consciousness are pristine cognition.

[8]:

On this axiom, see Guhyagarbha. Ch. 9. 35; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 156b-157a.

[9]:

'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, sphyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po. p. 69.

[10]:

These nine kinds of skillful means, otherwise known as the nine kinds of balanced absorption (snyoms-par 'jug-pa dgu, Sanskrit, navasamāpatti). are discussed by Mi-pham Rin-po-che in detail. pp. 117ff. They are as follows: absorption ('jog-pa) which is effected by study, continuous absorption (rgyun-'jog) which is effected by thought, Joint absorption (blan-te 'jog-pa) and further absorption (nye-bar 'jog-pa) which are effected by recollection, discipline (dul-ba) and quiescence (zhi-ba) which are effected by awareness of the present, continuous quiescence (nye-bar zhi-ba) which is effected by perseverance, and contemplative equipoise (mnyam-par bzhag-pa) which is effected by experience.

[11]:

For an explanation of the ways in which the creation stage purifies and transforms living creatures at different stages of development, see NSTB,

Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 158b-160a. The four places or stations of birth (skye-gnas rigs-bzhi) are womb-birth (mngal-nas skye-ba. Sanskrit jārayuja), egg-birth (sgo-nga-las skye-ba. Sanskrit aṇḍaja), birth from moisture (drodsher-las skye-ba. Sanskrit saṃsvedaja), and miraculous birth (brdzus-te skye-ba. Sanskrit upapāduka). The five awakenings (mngon-byang lnga), or steps in creative visualisation, are emptiness (stong-pa-nyid). the lunar throne (zla-gdan). the seed-syllables of buddha-speech (gsung yig-'bru). the hand-implements symbolic of buddha-mind (thugs phyag-mtshan), and the complete body of the deity in question (sku yongs-rdzogs). The four rites of indestructible reality (rdo-rje cho-ga bzhi) here refer to the four miracles (cho-'phrul bzhi). namely, contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin). consecration or blessing (byin-rlabs), empowerment (dbang-bskur). and offering (mchod-pa).

[12]:

The three rites (cho-ga gsum) in the Intermediate mode of creative visualisation are the body of the deity in question in its entirety (sku yongs-rdzogs). the buddha-speech in the form of seed-syllables (gsung yig-'bru). and the buddha-mind of meditative concentration (thugs bsam-tan). See NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[13]:

On the contemplations of Anuyoga, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 164b ff.

[14]:

On the meditative techniques of Cutting through Resistance (khregs-chod). refer to dPal-sprul O-rgyan 'Jigs-med Chos-kyi dBang-po's commentary on dGa'-rab rDo-rde, tshig-gsum gnad-du brdeg-pa. and its English translations by T. Thondup and K. Dowman. On All-surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal). see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 190a-211b: also Phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 13, pp. 463-477.

[15]:

On the distinctions between these modes of conduct in Mahāyoga, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 160b-161a. There are said to be eight divisions of the conduct of careful self-restraint, namely, faithful perseverance, conduct in harmony with discriminative awareness, conduct in harmony with compassion, one-sided conduct, elaborate conduct, conduct concerning the provisions, conduct concerning miraculous abilities, and Immediate conduct.

[16]:

The aftermath of meditation (rjes-thob) is a technical term referring to the experience of pure appearances when periods of meditative absorption have been interrupted. See, e.g., dPal-sprul O-rgyan 'Jigs-med Chos-kyi dBang-po, tshig-gsum gnad-du brdeg-pa.

[17]:

A detailed and clear explanation of these rites is given in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 11, pp. 386-402.

[18]:

The structure of the root-tantra itself corresponds to the arrangement of the maṇḍalas of ground, path and result. The "rank of Samantabhadra" refers to the sixteenth buddha-level, ye-shes bla-ma. on which see above, p. 161, note 51

[19]:

For a detailed explanation of these empowerments and their correspondence, see phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 9. PP. 313-332. 370-379. Ch. 10.

[20]:

See above, p. 2ff, note 36.

[21]:

The five poisons are the five conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs-linga), namely, desire, hatred, pride, envy and delusion. The five nectars (bdud-rtsi lnga) are excrement, urine, blood, semen, and flesh. See 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal. spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po. p. 166.

[22]:

On the feast-offerings (tshogs). see phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Chs. 11-12, pp. 379-439, esp. 402-408. The four aspects of ritual service and rites of attainment (bsnyen-sgrub yan-lag bzhi) are ritual service (bsnyen-pa. Sanskrit, entailing the recitation of mantra and one-pointed prayerful devotion to a deity that is visualised; further ritual service (nye-bar bsnyen-pa. Sanskrit upaseyā), entailing the prayers that the deity's blessings will descend and transform the mundane body, speech and mind into the three syllables of indestructible reality: attainment (sgrub-pa. Sanskrit sādhana). entailing that accomplishments are absorbed from the Sugatas of the ten directions into the deity and thence into oneself, either in actuality, meditation or dreams: and great attainment (sgrub-chen. Sanskrit mahāsādhana). which is the ultimate realisation of primordial purity experienced when body, speech and mind are identical to those of the deity. See 'Ju-Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, tshig-don rnam-bzhad padma dkar-po. PP. 22-23.

[23]:

As 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po. pp. 204-206, adds: The outer offerings comprise dance, song, mental contemplation, desired raptures, wondrous appropriate sacraments, superior skillful means, and the establishment of phenomenal existence as the ground. The

inner offerings Include many aspects corresponding to the outer offerings, and in particular the pure offerings of the body of Indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i sku) with Its network of energy channels, currents and seminal points. The secret offerings of sexual union and "liberation" transform the five poisons Into five pristine cognitions and the three poisons Into offerings of buddha-body, speech and mind. The real offering: Is described as "the supreme bliss of purity and sameness."

[24]:

The four Immeasurables (tshad-med bzhi) are loving kindness (byams-pa. Sanskrit maitrī). compassion (snying-rje. Sanskrit karuṇā), sympathetic Joy (dga'-ba. Sanskrit muditā). and equanimity (btang-snyoms. Sanskrit upekṣā). See e.g., Sgam-po-pa. The Jewel Liberation. pp. 91ff.; NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, 10a-11b.

[25]:

These four rites are explained in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 9. pp. 313-315. within the context of the homa ritual. See also Tadeusz Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites" and S. Beyer, The Cult of Tārā. pp. 257, 264-275.

[26]:

The four resultant pristine cognitions, as explained in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 48a, are respectively outer, inner and secret awareness of the outer, inner and secret major and minor marks on the buddha-body; and the pristine cognition of reality (de-kho-na-nyid ye-shes) which is aware of the supreme marks of the Great Perfection.

[27]:

On the formation of hand-gestures, see phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 8, pp. 276-294; also S. Beyer, The Cult of Tārā. pp. 143ff.

[28]:

On this definition, which derives the Sanskrit mantra. from manas, mind, and trāya. to protect, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, p. 143b.

[29]:

The realisations referred to are those of the four kinds of awareness-holders (rig-'dzin rnam-bzhi). which are discussed in phyogs-bcu mun-sel. Ch. 9, PP. 331-332; Ch. 12, pp. 424-435. The first three—the awareness holder of maturation (rnam-smin ria-'dzin). the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan (tshe-dbang rig-'dzin) and the awareness-holder of the great seal (phyag-chen rig-'dzin)—are considered to be provisional results in relation to the conclusive awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (lhun-grub rig-'dzin). Both this text and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 161a-162a, distinguish, however, between the latter and the complete buddha-level.

[30]:

Alternatively, retentive mantras are the essence of discriminative awareness, originating from the teachings of Prajñāpāramitā. gnostic mantras are the essence of skillful means, originating from the Kriyātantra, and secret mantras are the non-dual pristine cognition, originating from Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. See e.g., 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rgyud-'bum dris-lan. p. 91, who gives this description on the basis of a quote from the dgongs-pa grub-pa'i rgyud.

16. Mahāyoga and Atiyoga Interpretations of the Guhyagarbha

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In Tibet the commentarial literature associated with the Guhyagarbhatantra broadly falls into two categories—texts which interpret the Guhyagarbhatantra in the context of the “distant lineage of transmitted precepts”, according to which this tantra is representative of Mahāyoga, and texts which interpret it in terms of the resultant vehicle, Atiyoga, the Great Perfection.

As Mi-pham rNam-rgyal says in his spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po:[1]

The exegetical methods which apply to the meaning of this tantra comprise two great traditional paths of conveyance, namely the exegetical method which is extensive and common, and the expository method which is profound and uncommon. The former refers to the wondrous tradition of the transmitted precepts of the glorious Zur family who were kings among all the holders of gnostic mantras, and is explained in accordance with Mahāyoga's own textual tradition. The second refers to the unsurpassed tradition of the two lions of speech—Rong-zom Paṇḍita Chos-kyi bZang-po and kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa. Because this tantra is classified as the Ati or highest division of Mahāyoga, it is essentially identical to the Mahā classification of Atiyoga, among the three divisions of the Great Perfection. For in the secret Great Perfection there are three categories of teaching, namely that which reveals the maṇḍala in which creation and perfection are indivisible and mind and pristine cognition are manifest in themselves, that which reveals mind-as-such to be the natural expression of primordial buddha-hood without regard for creation or perfection, and that which reveals pristine cognition in its essence, manifesting in and of itself as the nature of buddha-hood. Among them, this exposition accords with the first.

And he continues:

While these two exegetical methods are of a single savour in that their intentions are directed towards the conclusive essential meaning, in the context of this work, the exegesis accords with the latter tradition, possessing the essentials of profound esoteric instruction.

These two exegetical traditions do not therefore uphold contradictory dogmas but they indicate a subtle difference of emphasis. In the words of Lo-chen Dharmasri:[2]

Mahāyoga realises all things to be the miraculous events of mind-as-such in which appearance and emptiness are indivisible, Anuyoga realises all things to be the expressive power of mind-as-such, in which the expanse and pristine cognition are Indivisible; and Atiyoga realises all things to be manifest in and of themselves as mind-as-such, the naturally present pristine cognition which is without creation or cessation from the beginning.

And Zur-chung-pa Shes-rab Grags:[3]

Mahāyoga appears as the miracle of awareness. Anuyoga appears as the expressive power of intrinsic awareness. Atiyoga is awareness, manifest in and of itself.

While the standard techniques of Mahāyoga, stressing the nature of the ground and the gradual visualisation of the creation stage, are of course present, this text equally demonstrates the integration of creation and perfection stages and the selfmanifesting nature of mind and pristine cognition, which are features of Atiyoga. Indeed, the tantra-text comprises both creation and perfection stages, and the seeds of Great Perfection, indicating that there is no fundamental contradiction between these exegetical approaches.[4]

The first method is exemplified by those treatises derived from the "distant lineage", namely the Indian commentaries by Līlāvajra, 'grel-pa spar-khab / Mahārājatantraśrīguhyagarbhanāmaṭikā (P. 4718), and Buddhaguhya, rnam-dbye 'grel, and the extant Tibetan commentaries by gYung-ston rDo-rje dPal (1284-1365), dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i rgyud-don gsal-byed me-long (NMKMG. Vol. 28), rTa-nag sGrol-ma-ba bSam-grub rDo-rje, khog-dbub (NMKMG. Vol. 28), Nam-mkha'i Rin-chen (c. 1653), gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi 'grel-bshad rgyud-don gsal-bar byed-pa'i sgron-ma yid-bzhin-gyi nor-bu (NMKMG. Vols. 29-30), sMan-lung-pa Mi-bskyod rDo-rje, gsang-snying 'grel-pa-dang spyi-don (NMKMG. Vol. 31). Lo-chen Dharmasri (1654-1718), dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi rgyal-po sgyu-'phrul dra-ba syi-don-gyi sgo-nas gtan-la 'babs-par 'byed-pa'i legs-bshad gsang-bdag zhal-lung (NMKMG. Vols. 33-34), and gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan (NMKMG. Vol. 32), Padma 'Gyur-med rGya-mtsho, spyi-don mthong-bas don-rtogs (NMKMG. Vol. 35), Kah-thog 'Gyur-a med Tshe-dbang mChog-grub (c. 1764), gsangs-sngags nang-gi lam-rim rgya-cher 'grel-pa sangs-rgyas gnyis-pa'i dgongs-rgyan (NMKMG. Vol. 35), rDo-grub III 'Jigs-med bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma (1865-1926), dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i rgyud-kyi spyi-don nyung-ngu'i ngag-gis rnam-par 'byed-pa rin-chen mdzod-kyi lde-mig (NMKMG. Vol. 35), and 'Gyur-med Phan-bde'i 'Od-zer (c. 1924), zab-don sgo-brgya 'byed-pa'i lde'u-mig (NMKMG. Vol. 36).

The second is exemplified by Sūryaprabhāsimha, dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po rgya-cher 'grel-pa (p. 4719), Padmasambhava, man-ngag lta-phreng (P. 4726) and rnam-bshad chen-mo, Rong-zom-pa (c. 1100), rgyud-

rgyal gsang-ba'i snying-po'i 'grel-pa dkon-mchog 'grel (NMKMG. Vol. 25). kLong-chen-pa's mun-sel skor-gsum (NMKMG. Vols. 26-27). 'Ju Mi-pham rNam-rgyal (1846-1912). spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po (NMKMG. Vol. 27). and gZhan-phan Chos-kyi sNang-ba (mKhan-po gZhan-dga', 1871-1927), sgyu-phrul drya-ba'i rgyud-kyi mchan-'grel nyi-zla'i snying-po.[5]

In the course of the textual annotations, the reader's attention will be drawn to specific points which differentiate these two approaches, the first tending towards reductionism and classification with emphasis on the structural basis of Mahāyoga, the second elaborating the essential, often covert meanings.

This edition and translation of the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra largely follows the interpretation of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1363) in his celebrated interlinear commentary, phyogs-bcu mun-sel, which accompanies our text. The variant readings of the extant manuscript and xylograph editions raise further difficulties, which have often been resolved by consulting the vajrapādas established by Lo-chen Dharmaśrī in his definitive gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. The approach adopted is clearly a traditional one of philological, literary and historical emphasis in contrast to the phenomenological interpretations pioneered by H.V. Guenther. Nonetheless the legacy of the latter has left its imprint in the rendition of certain key terms—pristine cognition (ye-shes) and discriminative awareness (shes-rab) among others.[6]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

'Ju Mi-pham rNam-reyal, spyi-don 'od-gsal anying-po. pp. 11-12.

[2]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. p. 68.

[3]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. pp. 69-69.

[4]:

Within the section on the maṇḍala of peaceful deities. Ch. 13 concerns the perfection stage and the Great Perfection.

[5]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag zhal-lung. pp. 83 ff.. is a major source for this discussion on the two exegetical traditions. On the mKhan-po gZhan-dga' commentary, see above p. 106, note 174.

[6]:

Whenever English technical terms are not explained or accompanied by

their Tibetan equivalents, the reader should refer to the glossaries of technical terms and enumerations in NSTB, along with the definitions provided in NSTB, Book 1. As far as the two terms mentioned here are concerned, the expression "wisdom" does seem inadequate. According to bod-rgya tshig-mdzod chen-mo, the term ye-shes is variously described as pristine or primordially abiding cognition (ye-nas gnas-pa'i shes-pa) or the awareness of coalescent emptiness and radiance abiding naturally in the minds of all beings (sems-can thams-cad-kyi rgyud-la rang-bzhin-gyis gnas-pa'i stong-gsal-gyi rig-pa). As Indicated by the definitions of the five kinds of pristine cognition in NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 2, pp. 60a-63a, it is the perception of the buddhas rather than an accumulation of factual wisdom or knowledge. The term shes-rab is described as the discriminative awareness of the essence, distinctions, particular & general characteristics, and advantages & disadvantages of any object of reference within one's own perceptual range, at the conclusion of which doubts are resolved (rang-yul-gyi brtag-bya'i dngos-po-la dmigs-nas de'i ngo-bo-dang khyad-par-dang rang-spyi'i mtshan-nyid-dang blang-dor legs-par 'bhyed-pa'i shes-pa rab-kyi mthar-son-pa the-tshom zlog-pa'i byed-pa las-can-no). Discriminative awareness is said to be produced through study, thought or contemplation. See Sgam-po-pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, pp. 202ff.

17. The editions consulted in this study

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a) Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra:

In the absence of the original Sanskrit manuscripts, this edition of the root-tantra is derived from the following extant Tibetan versions:

A. The Karma Chos-sgar Block-print

B. The sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur—T. 832

C. The Peking bKa'-'gyur—p. 457

D. Collected Tantras the rNying-ma-pa—NGB. Vol. 14 (Thimphu edition of Gtin-skyes Dgon-pa-byan Monastery ms. 1973-75)

E. Collected Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa—NGB. Vol. 14 (IOL, ms.)

F. The version utilised by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in phyogs-bcu mun-sel.

G. The root-verses given in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan.

b) phyogs-bcu mun-sel:

i) The sPa-gro edition, which is a 1975 reprint based on the xylographs of the A-'dzom 'Brug-pa Chos-sgar. prepared by A-'dzom 'Brug-pa (1842-1934).

ii) The dGa'-ldan Phun-tshogs-gling edition (British Library. Waddell Collection).

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[Part Three contains a translation of the root-tantra, each chapter of which is accompanied by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's commentary phyogs-bcu mun-cel and annotations. For each chapter the commentary includes an overview (spyi-don) and an interlinear exegesis (gzhun-don). Annotations are supplied in Volume Two after the translation and commentary. By way of Introduction, the work is preceded by the foreword from phyogs-bcu mun-sel.]

[Foreword (2.1–7.1)]

Herein is contained a commentary on the glorious Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real (Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayatantra) entitled Dispelling All Darkness of the Ten Directions.

This work is an analysis of the kingly Magical Net, the glorious Tantra of the Secret Nucleus definitive With Respect to the Real, which actually dispels all the darkness of the ten directions through the great appearance of its sunlit and moonlit clouds.

Obeisance to all Sugatas of the ten directions and four times, along with their sons, without exception,—none excepted, omitting none at all.
[1]

All victory to Samantabhadra and his queen,
In whom phenomena and reality are non-dual.
Who attained buddha-hood in the essence
Of the buddha-body of reality, non-dual by nature.
He is the original lord, perfect In enlightened attributes,

In whom the expanse and pristine cognition are non-dual,
The Inconceivable and uncompounded one
In whom existence and quiescence are non-dual.

I bow before the spontaneously present host
Which assumes limitless peaceful and wrathful forms—
The field of the Bounteous Array which Is the most
Immeasurable apparition and inner radiance of the sugatas.
The limitless celestial palace conjured from
The nature of the five kinds of pristine cognition,
And the perfect rapture or natural expression
Of the five enlightened families.
Which emanates and is absorbed everywhere.

In the manner of oceanic clouds.

Obeisance to Vajrasattva, the Lord of Secrets,[2]
Most marvelous spirituality of the conquerors
Who delivers the perfect buddha-speech,
Formost of all enlightened families and maṇḍalas
Who acts on behalf of living beings through diverse emanations.
The perfect buddha, preceding all,
Who obtained the treasury of the supreme Secret Nucleus[3] —
For he Is without conjunction or disjunction.

To clarify the suddenly arisen conflicting emotions
Of those who require training.
The Teacher causes a cascade of doctrine.
By virtue of its nature which liberates
In a gradual or non-gradual manner

In accordance with varying degrees of acumen.
The path of the supreme Secret Nucleus is highest of all.
It is the mighty teaching of the buddha-body of perfect rapture.
Which itself steers the great chariot (of the doctrine)
Along tracks followed by countless conquerors
Of ancient and recent time.
It appeared among the glorious of living creatures in the
Human world, and came to this Land of Snow Mountains,
Where its meaning, excellently translated and established
By genuine translators and scholars of the past.
Was analysed by many learned masters.
Firmly grasping that unsetting victory banner,
They caused the doctrinal tree of life to flourish.
And its thousand leaves of hundred-fold superior faith to stir.

Even though the sunlit meaning of this profound extensive a
Tantra is not within the perceptual range of my Intellect,[4]
The variegated forms of its words and meaning do appear
By opening the eyes with the surgical needle[5]
Of the eloquence of genuine masters.
Relying on their literary transmissions, logical reasoning.
And esoteric Instructions which perceive its entire meaning,
I must clarify the nucleus of definitive meaning in this work,
For the sake of those fortunate students who inspired it.

In this respect, the genuinely perfect Buddha, glorious Samantabhadra
who is learned in skillful means and a master of great spirituality, without
moving from the great palace of reality's expanse, manifested in and of
himself through the blessing of his natural spirituality, and assumed the
form of the Buddhas of the Five Enlightened Families as an ornament of
the spontaneous Bounteous Array of buddha-body, speech and mind.
Holding sway through his great might which is not extraneous to the
natural maṇḍala where the indestructible minds of all Buddhas of the ten
directions and four times are without duality, he taught the vehicle of
indestructible reality (vajrayāna), the secret mantras excellently endowed
with profound and extensive doctrines,[6] to Vajrasattva and other such

resultant spiritual warriors.

Through three modes of appearance (these teachings) naturally liberate the world-system of living beings who require training; for the inner secret mantras do appear in three modes—the creation phase or Mahāyoga, the literary transmissions or Anuyoga, and the Great Perfection or Ātiyoga—which are respectively outer. Inner and secret. The secret mode among these also has three aspects, which respectively: reveal the maṇḍala which manifests in and of itself as mind and pristine cognition, without duality of creation and perfection stages; reveal mind-as-such, without reference to creation and perfection stages, to be the nature of primordial Buddhahood; and reveal pristine cognition in its self-manifesting essence to be the nature of Buddhahood. Among these aspects, it is the maṇḍala which manifests in and of itself as mind and pristine cognition, without duality of creation and perfection stages, that is revealed here as the actual awakening of the Magical Net.[7]

This (cycle of the Magical Net) also comprises four sections, namely, the Magical Net of Vajrasattva which reveals all things of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to be self-manifesting and indivisible; the Magical Net of Vairocana (T. 466, NGB. Vol. 19) which extensively reveals the ritual activity and feast-offerings; the Magical Net of the Goddess (T. 836, NGB. Vol. 15) which actually reveals the display of reality; and the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (T. 360, NGB. Vol. 15) which all-pervasively reveals the vehicle.

The Magical Net of Vajrasattva itself comprises eight sections, namely, the glorious Secret Nucleus (T. 832, NGB. Vol. 14) which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be manifest in and of themselves; the Forty-Chapter Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which perfectly reveals enlightened activity; the Eight-Chapter Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which perfectly reveals the maṇḍala; the Superior Magical Net (T. 837, NGB. Vol. 14) which clearly reveals the empowerments; the Supplementray Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) which reveals the commitments as supreme; the Eighty-Chapter Magical Net (T. 834, NGB. Vol. 14) which extensively reveals enlightened attributes; the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833, NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the deities' body-colours and symbolic hand-implements; the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the creation stage; and the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) which clearly reveals the path of skillful means.

Of these, the present exegesis concerns the great kindly and glorious Tantra of The Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real (T. 832)—the furthest summit of all vehicles, the source of all literary transmissions, the great short-cut of the vehicle of all buddhas of the three times, and the most secret of all. It has three parts, namely, an exegesis of the meaning of the title, which is an aspect of its expressed realisation; the exegesis of the actual meaning of the tantra which clearly reveals the expressed meaning (of its twenty-two chapters); and the exegesis of the meaning contained in its perfect conclusion.

Footnotes and references:

Tibetan ma-lus mi-lus lug-pa med-pa. As explained below, p. 353, these synonymous terms respectively indicate the three buddha-bodies, i.e.. those of reality (dharmakāya), perfect rapture (saṃbhogakāya) and emanation (nirmāṇakāya). Identified respectively as Samantabhadra, the five enlightened families of conquerors (rgyal-ba rigs-lnga), and Vajrasattva, these are the subject of the first three stanzas of the invocatory verses which follow.

[2]:

On Guhyapati (gsang-bdag), the “Lord of Secrets”, who is a form of Vajrapāṇi, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 80. Vajrasattva here is a generic term meaning “spiritual warrior of indestructible reality” and does not refer to Akṣobhya.

[3]:

I.e., the Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra.

[4]:

I.e., the intellect of the author, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa.

[5]:

Tibetan mig-thur dbye-bas.

[6]:

The doctrines concerning the abiding nature of reality (gnas-lugs) are held to be either vast (rgyas) because they contain manifold skillful means, or profound (zab) because they essentially represent discriminative awareness and emptiness. See also NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 132ff.

[7]:

Of the three aspects of the secret mode enumerated here, the first corresponds to the tantra-texts of this cycle, which Integrate creation and perfection stages with the Great Perfection, the second corresponds to texts of the Mental Class (sems-sde) and Spatial Class (klong-sde) of the Great Perfection, and the third corresponds to the Esoteric Instructional Class (man-ngag-gi sde). See below, p. 997. On the distinctions between these classes, see NSTB, Book. 1, Pt. 4, pp. 190a-211b; and for their lineages, *ibid.* Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 120-143. The term sgyu-'phrul drya-ba (māyājāla) is explained in two parts—the first (“magical emanation”) Indicating that psychophysical components inherently abide as the male deities, Vairocana etc., and the second (“net”) indicating that the elements inherently abide as the female deities, Dhātviśvarī and so forth. See below. Ch. 4, p. 582, Ch. 11, pp. 889-890.

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Root-text:

In Sanskrit: Śṛīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra.

In Tibetan: dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid rnam-par nges-pa'i rgyud chen-po.

In English: The Great Tantra Of The Glorious Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real[1]

Obeisance to the Transcendent Lord, glorious Samantabhadra.[2]
Commentary: Exegesis of the Meaning of the Title

(7.1-15.6)

This has two sections—the actual meaning of the title and a description of the offering that is made with obeisance.

The former (comments on Title, section 1). It has four topics, namely, the required meaning, the subsumed meaning, the verbal meaning, and a rejection of erroneous criticisms.

First, the required meaning has three aspects:

i. There is the meaning understood dependent on name. This means that Just as a bulbous narrow-based (zhabs-zhum) object for pouring water is understood from the name “vase”, so all things are revealed through the title itself to be within the unique maṇḍala of primordial Buddha-hood. Those of keenest acumen are required to realise only that.

ii. There is the name understood dependent on meaning. This means that Just as that which is bulbous is understood to be a "vase", so the meanins of Buddha-hood In the primordial maṇḍala is itself understood as the title (of the text). Those of mediocre acumen are required to understand all things merely as names, once they have indeed been named.

iii. There is the consciousness in which name and meanins are interrelated. This means that Just as the vase and its bulbous shape are not different, so the title and its meaning are known without duality. Those of dull acumen are required to comprehend, over a long period of time, that nature in which word and meaning are indivisible.

Moreover, those who understand the meaning from the name (i.e. title) are required to know all things as the identity of primordial Buddhahood, Just as the identification of medicines is easily found in a book or as an inventory of soldier's arrows is accessible for one who knows how they are classified.

The subsumed meanins (of the title) is that all things are revealed as the nature of enlightenment in the maṇḍala of the primordial conqueror (Samantabhadra).

The verbal meaning is expressed in Tibetan (bod-skad-du)—the language of Greater Tibet, which is the dBu-gtsang area among the country's three provinces,[3] into which the tantra has been most excellently translated.

Now, the Conqueror's Intention is directed towards the realisation of the inexhaustible wheels of adornment—the Buddha-body, speech and mind in which all things are primordial Buddhahood and in which all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are indivisibly included. But because this is most difficult to realise it is a secret (gsang-ba) topic. Those to whom it is secret are unworthy recipients, obscured in their three media (of body, speech and mind).

There are both hidden (gab) and concealed (sbas) modes of secrecy: The three Buddha-bodies are hidden because, although present in oneself, they have been obscured by suddenly arisen obscurations and are unperceived.

Accordingly the Hevajratantras (T. 417-8) says:

Sentient beings are themselves buddhas
But they are obscured by suddenly arisen stains.

And in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Just as when there happens to be an inexhaustible treasure
Underground within the house of a pauper.
But he is ignorant of it
And it never says to him, "Here I am!"
So it is because the precious treasure within the mind—
The immaculate reality neither to be clarified nor established—is not realised
That the suffering of deprivation is felt everywhere
And abundantly by those living creatures.

Illustrated by these (quotations), the profound view and intention are hidden because they are not known through one's own ability and are either unrevealed by others or misunderstood when revealed, Just as for one who has been born blind the appearance of form is hidden.

The concealed mode of secrecy refers to the uncommon view, meditation and conduct because, if they were not concealed, the approach to that which is secret would be confused and become a topic for exageration and depreciation.

This is also stated in the Clarification of Commitments (P. 4744):

The secret mantras are flawless.
For the sake of sentient beings they are very secret.
When kept secret, their accomplishment does not vanish.
Therefore, for secrecy, various pure symbols are taught.

Although many enumerations of the term “secret” are explained in different literary transmissions, these writings are mostly redundant because they are gathered in this present (Tantra). And if it too is subsumed, it comprises the three Inconceivable secrets (or mysteries) of buddha-body, speech and mind.

The nucleus (snying-po) Is the Great Perfection or abiding nature of the meaning of primordial Buddha-hood—the conclusive Inexhaustible wheels of adornment or Buddha-body, speech and mind, the nature of all things. It also refers to the profound and extensive (texts) which are Its expressions.

The real (de-kho-na-nyid) is the very nature of the three buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction. It is all-pervasive, unfailing reality and unchanging.

The nature definitive with respect to (nges-pa) the real is not that which, according to the provisional meaning, is said to be present in buddhas and absent in sentient beings, but that which, primordially abides in everything, as oil within sesame.[4]

Moreover the maṇḍala in which all things are primordial Buddha-hood is the ground or Secret Nucleus. Its experiential cultivation through the non-duality of creation and perfection is the path or the real. Its conclusive and spontaneously present three Buddha-bodies are the result, which is directly definitive with respect to the ground. In brief, the title (of this tantratext) reveals the very essence of primordial Buddha-hood in a nature where appearances and emptiness, creation and perfection, and saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are without duality.

The rejection of erroneous criticisms is as follows: Those who adhere to erroneous bubbles on the blue lake of Ignorance and who forcefully stir the waves of wrong view and envy say, “No Sanskrit is cited at the beginning of this tantra of yours. Therefore it is not authentic.” In reply to this there are some who say, “The Sanskrit is implied by the words In Tibetan (bod-skad-du). The expression In Sanskrit: Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya does exist, but is not cited (In this edition) in order to avoid repetition.” There are also some who reason that these words are

Indeed absent in the Sanskrit volumes and on that same basis many Sūtras such as the Array Enlightened Attributes in the Buddha-field at Amitābha (T. 49) and many tantras such as the Root Tantra at Cakrasaṃvara (T. 368) would implicitly be inauthentic because (Sanskrit titles) are not cited therein.

While such assertions are indeed true, it is also the case that the definitive usage of the Sanskrit (title) and words of obeisance were employed from the time of Ral-pa-can onwards, and that previously they occurred to a limited extent only. Because this (Tantra at the Secret Nucleus) was translated during the time of the king of bSam-yas (Khri-srong lDe-btsan) the Sanskrit is not cited.[5] It was not indicated because there is little point in repeating a single title many times.

The latter section concerning the obeisance (comments on Title, section

2):

The four demons, two obscurations and propensities which have been subdued (bcom) [by the Transcendent Lord][6] comprise the excellent endowment of renunciation. The four demons are the demon of the lord of death who interrupts the lifespan, the demon of the divine prince who interrupts contemplation, the demon of the components who Interrupts non-residual (nirvāṇa), and the demon of conflicting emotions who interrupts release.[7] These are said to be subdued [by the Transcendent Lord] because he does not possess them from the beginning.

The two obscurations are those of conflicting emotions and the knowable.[8] They comprise the thoughts which are the particular characteristics of the five poisons and also the mind that clings to the antidotes which purify them.

It says in the Analysis of the Middle Way and Extremes (T. 4021):

Conceptualising thoughts which concern envy and so forth
Are called the obscuration of conflicting emotions;
Conceptualising thoughts which concern the three world-systems
Are called the obscuration of the knowable.

The buddha-body and pristine cognition which are possessed (ldan: by the Transcendent Lord) comprise the excellent endowment of realisation.

Accordingly the Samputāntara (T. 381) says:

The excellent endowments of lordship, noble form.
Glory, fame, pristine cognition, and perseverance:
These six are said to be possessed.

Lordship refers to the purity of the essential buddha-body of reality, and Its (pristine cognition) of the expanse of reality. Noble form refers to the buddha-body of perfect rapture and its mirror-like (pristine cognition). Glory refers to the buddha-body of awakening and its (pristine cognition) of sameness. Fame and pristine cognition refer to the emanational body which performs acts of benefit through Its qualitative and quantitative understanding and so to its (pristine cognition) of particular discernment. And perseverance refers to the unchanging Buddha-body of indestructible reality itself, which manifests limitless enlightened attributes without moving from the expanse, and so to 1 ft (the pristine cognition) of accomplishment.

The term “excellent endowment” which is appended to these five, beginning with lordship, indicates that they surpass the pristine cognition of sublime students.[9]

There are also some who profess that the word lord (bcom-ldan) indicates that the object implied in the term “subdued” (bcom-pa) is “possessed” (ldan-pa). The word Transcendent ('das) indicates that (the lord) has transcended all symbols of elaborate conception—saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, acceptance and rejection, and being and non-being.

It says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Liberated from existence and quiescence,
Indivisible from the ocean of enlightened attributes.
Transcending all elaborate conceptions,
The Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan-'das) is spacious quiescence.

The term glorious (dpal) refers to the (intrinsic) lack of movement from the buddha-body of the expanse of reality and to the extraneous glory with which the buddha-body of form arises in a spontaneous manner from the disposition of that reality itself.[10]

It is said in the Tantra of the Rutting Elephant (NGB. Vol. 19):

Without moving from the buddha-body of reality,
The fivefold buddha-body of form is spontaneously present,
And therefrom the two kinds of benefit[11] are completed.
Thus glory displays spontaneity and perfection together.

As to the term Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang-po: the all-positive one): The natural inexhaustible wheels of adornment, the buddha-body, speech and mind, are present at all (kun-tu) times because they are unchanging in the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array;[12] and their great rapture which manifests In and of itself is positive (bzang-po) because it is perfect.

The Secret Pristine Cognition (T. 392) says:

This nature is unmoving, spontaneously perfect
And all-positive in its perceptual range.

When analysed, (the term Samantabhadra) has five aspects: Firstly, it refers to Samantabhadra, the original teacher whose manifest enlightenment preceded all.

As the Tantra of the Marvelous King (NGB. Vol. 2) says:

The first, preceding all
Who conclusively reached the self-manifesting ground.
Was purified (sangs) before and expansive (rgyas) before.
Therefore Samantabhadra, first (of buddhas).
Arises as the teacher of all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

He is called the original lord, not only because he reveals reality or describes natural mind-as-such, but also because he reveals the path of deliverance to all buddhas.

In the AllAccomplishing King (T. 828) he says:

Because I preceded all the conquerors
I arose as their parents.
Revealing the three Buddha-bodies.

And:

I, teacher of the teachers.
The all-accomplishing king,
Became the three buddha-bodies,
The teachers who emerge from myself.

It is because this teacher Is present that the path of liberation at the beginning of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa has been revealed, and that the conquerors of the three times have emerged. Otherwise, it would be Improper even for a buddha to emerge in the world. All (buddhas) would be the same as sentient beings, and would themselves not know how to reveal the path to one another. It is improper for some of them to be buddhas and others beings in saṃsāra. The explanation according to the common vehicles that there is neither beginning nor end is intended with reference to time and reality. In particular it is found in Madhyamaka that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are without beginning or end, like space, because they are without Independent existence.[13]

Furthermore, if buddha and sentient being were different from the beginning, the ground of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa would be different, so that they would not be connected by spirituality.[14] Therefore this (fundamental) nature is most clearly stated in the aforementioned Unsurpassed Tantrapiṭaka of the secret mantras. It has been excellently established by the great master Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra; and it is also esteemed in this (Secret Nucleus).[15] Secondly, the abiding nature of all things, the real, is the natural Samantabhadra. Thirdly, there is the Samantabhadra of the ground, which refers to the essence of inner radiance or mind-as-such, the nature of the three Buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction, which is primordial Buddha-hood because it is effortless and spontaneous from the present. Fourthly, there is Samantabhadra the path. This is the arising of realisation through experience of the path that skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality. And fifthly, there is Samantabhadra the result; for once the path has been concluded, the ground is directly reached and the five Buddha-bodies and pristine cognitions are spontaneously present.

As to the literary transmissions which refer to these (aspects of Samantabhadra), I shall not enlarge upon them because there are many written accounts.[16]

The term obeisance (phyag-'tshal-lo) means that those who resort to this same object (i.e. Samantabhadra) sincerely commit their three media (of body, speech and mind). It is not the case, as some opine, that obeisance is made to the compiler because no such custom is observed in the Sanskrit books. The Short Commentary (P. 4755) does include an Invocation to its compiler but not as a commentary on these actual words of obeisance.

Indeed (while commenting on these present words of obeisance) it says:

Having naturally subdued the four demons
In the expanse of sameness,

Perfectly possessing the two provisions or natural seals.
Transcending extremes of existence and non-existence.
Glorious In all intrinsic and extraneous ways.
Positive in natural realisation of all things and in spirituality,
Samantabhadra in whom deity is indivisible with deity,
Obeisance to you; for you are realised.

The Actual Exegesis of the Meaning of the Tantra

(15.6–620.1)

Next, the actual exegesis of the meaning of the tantra, which clearly reveals its expressed meaning, has three sections: The First (Chs. 1-3) indicates how the ground, the natural and spontaneous maṇḍala, arises from a disposition of spirituality. The second (Chs. 4-21) indicates how the maṇḍalas of both peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from it. And the third (Ch. 22) indicates how the tantra is taught to genuine beings and then subsequently entrusted.

The first of these sections (concerning the natural maṇḍala of the ground) also is threefold: (Firstly in Ch. 1), it comprises the array of the teacher, the Buddha-body of reality, who manifests in and of himself as the maṇḍala of indestructible reality's expanse in the spontaneous field of the Bounteous Array, without moving from the expanse. (Secondly in Ch. 2). it indicates how this very teacher, without duality in respect of the buddha-mind or naturally present pristine cognition which arises as the five enlightened families, meaningfully expresses all things as primordial Buddha-hood and how his spirituality is aroused. (Thirdly in Ch. 3). it comprises the form assumed by the nature of spirituality, which is arrayed as the lamp of the world and establishes all things without moving from reality.[17]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan ma-lus mi-lus lug-pa med-pa. As explained below, p. 353, these synonymous terms respectively indicate the three buddha-bodies, i.e.. those of reality (dharmakāya), perfect rapture (saṃbhogakāya) and emanation (nirmāṇakāya). Identified respectively as Samantabhadra, the five enlightened families of conquerors (rgyal-ba rigs-lnga), and Vajrasattva, these are the subject of the first three stanzas of the invocatory verses which follow.

[2]:

On Guhyapati (gsang-bdag), the “Lord of Secrets”, who is a form of Vajrapāṇi, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 80. Vajrasattva here is a generic term meaning “spiritual warrior of indestructible reality” and does not refer to Akṣobhya.

[3]:

The dialects of the western region, s'Tod mnga'-ris skor-gsum, and the

eastern region of mDo-khams are here differentiated from that of the central region, dBus-gtsang.

[4]:

On the distinctions between provisional meaning (drang-don) and the primordial or absolute meaning (nges-don) in terms of the causal vehicles of dialectics (rgyu mtshan-nyid theg-pa). see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 92a-95b, 116b-121a.

[5]:

On the period of the early eighth century translations and the reforms instituted by Ral-pa-can, see 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, rgyud-'bum dris-lan. pp. 285-288.

[6]:

This term renders Sanskrit bhagavān. Tibetan bcom-ldan-'das. The hermeneutical significance of each Tibetan syllable is explained here, pp. 324-326, 351-352.

[7]:

Respectively these are: Tibetan 'chi-bdag-gi bdud: lha-'i bu'i bdud: phung-po'i bdud; and nyon-mongs-pa'i bdud (Sanskrit mṛtyupatimāra; devaputramāra; skandhamāra; and kleśeamāra). Of these the first two are said to be demons of non-human agency (amanuṣyamāra) and the latter two demons of conceptual thought (vikalpanāmāra). On the difference between residual (lhag-bcas) and non-residual (lhag-med) nirvāṇa in terms of the causal vehicles, see NSTB. Book 1, p. 124a. The residue concerns the consciousness of the cessation of obscurations and the knowledge that they are not recreated. In terms of the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po) the residue refers to the traces of rūpaskandha which are left behind in the lesser attainment of the 'ja'-lus. but not in the attainment of the 'ja'-lus 'pho-ba chen-po (Sanskrit mahāsaṃkrāntikāya). See NSTB, Book 1, pp. 204a.-211b.

[8]:

Tibetan nyon-mongs-pa-dang shes-bya'i sgrib-pa. On how these two obscurations are abandoned in the three causal vehicles, see NSTB, Book 1, pp. 123b-131b.

[9]:

The expression “sublime” ('phags-pa) indicates those bodhisattvas who have reached the levels of non-regression, particularly the tenth, Dharmamegha.

[10]:

The reality (chos-nyid) of dharmakāya is contrasted with the apparent

or apparitional reality (chos-can) of the rūpakāya.

[11]:

I.e. benefit of self (rang-don) and others (gzhan-don).

[12]:

On this Ghanavyūha realm of Akaniṣṭha which is associated with the teaching of the sambhogakāya, see below, pp. 357-389.

[13]:

The present usage of “beginningless” to designate the common ground of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa or the resultant view of an atemporal dharmakāya is here contrasted with its interpretation in the causal vehicles. The Śrāvakas hold consciousness and phenomena respectively to comprise a continuous or beginningless series of time moments and of indivisible atomic particles, while adherents of the Mahā-yāna focus on the emptiness, whereby phenomena are without beginning or inherent existence. On the distinctions between these three views, see NSTB. Book 1, Pts. 3-4, *passim*.

[14]:

Spirituality (Tibetan thugs-rje) is described as the motivating force behind the rūpakāya's appearance in the world and as the means whereby sentient beings are released from saṃsāra. See below, Chs. 2-3. It is differentiated here from the term snying-rje, which refers to the compassion cultivated by bodhisattvas on the path.

[15]:

The resultant view of the secret mantras is held to have its fullest expression in the anuttarayoga-tantras among the transmitted precepts (legs-bshad gsung) and in the esoteric instructions (man-ngag) among the treatises (bstan-bcos). The treatises composed by Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra are largely comprised in the Peking bsTan-'gyur. Vol. 83; while their corresponding gter-ma works are mostly contained in snying-thig ya-bzhi. See also above, pp. 77-81.

[16]:

The basic tantra-texts of Atiyoga (NGB. Vols. 1-10) concern the nature of Samantabhadra. Among equivalent treatises, one might note kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's own KCZD.

[17]:

I.e. the nirmāṇakāya which appears but is in reality identified with the dharmakāya.

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Thus, at the time of this explanation, [1] the Tathāgata, genuinely perfect Buddha and transcendent lord, was endowed with great rapture which is the Identity of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times. This is the nature in which all of them without exception, none excepted and omitting none at all, are Indivisible, without distinction or difference. [2]

In the abode of Akaniṣṭha, without extremes or centre, on the radiant wheel of pristine cognitions that is the limitless ground, there is his celestial palace, blazing forth with Jewels of pristine cognition, completely uninterrupted throughout the ten directions of space, fashioned as a square because it is vast in measureless enlightened attributes, and adorned with projecting bays of precious gems which are the superior pristine cognition. Its spire is the pristine cognition central to all, in which all maṇḍalas of the buddhas of the ten directions and four times without exception are not distinct from one another and are of a single essence. This inconceivable pristine cognition is extraordinary in its different details of shape, colour and so forth, which form the precious gems of pristine cognition.

The palace is superior and immeasurable in extent, [3] its garlands which are diverse gemstones of pristine cognition, its silken hangings, the ornaments of its frieze, and diverse forms, diverse sounds, diverse scents,

diverse savours, and diverse objects of contact which intermingle in the ten directions are naturally present. Bedecked in inconceivable ornaments which radiate without obscuration, it has embrasured gates, entered through the fourfold approach to liberation, and it has tiered pediments representing the eight kinds of liberation. These are indeed contained within (the celestial palace), without outer and inner (distinctions) in all respects.

Therein, [4] on a lion throne of fearlessness, an elephant throne of power, a horse throne of miraculous abilities, a peacock throne of power, and a bird throne of unimpeded nature, on seats of precious gems endowed with solar and lunar disks of natural inner radiance, and with untainted lotuses, [5] is the buddha-body without front or rear. in all directions his visage radiates penetratingly, and he is endowed with the major and minor marks. In every Inconceivable (world-system) he appears universally as diverse buddha-body, speech and mind. His two legs of skillful means and discriminative awareness assume the posture of the ascetic discipline of equanimity. His hands, which are the six pristine cognitions, are endowed with blazing hand-implements or seals of precious pristine cognition; and he has three heads, which are the inconceivable buddha-body, speech and mind. [6]

The Transcendent Lord was present as such in (the form of) the Tathāgata who is king of consciousness, the Tathāgata who is king of form, the Tathāgata who is king of feeling, the Tathāgata who is king of perception, and the Tathāgata who is king of habitual tendencies. All these too were resplendent in their (respective) colours—dark blue, white, yellow, scarlet, and green. [7] Also present was the genuine queen who is the expanse of apparition, the one who is the expanse of solidity, the one who is the expanse of liquidity, the one who is the expanse of warmth, and the one who is the expanse of mobility. Without duality in respect of the host of such queens, they entirely and Infinitely pervaded the expanse of reality. Filling it, just as, for example, a pod of sesame seeds, they were pervasively present. [8]

Then there was the great bodhisattva of indestructible sight, the great bodhisattva of indestructible hearing, the great bodhisattva of Indestructible scent, the great bodhisattva of indestructible savour, [9] the assembled host of the queen who is seen, the one who is heard, the one who is scented, and the one who is savoured. [10] There was the great bodhisattva of indestructible eyes, the great bodhisattva of indestructible ears, the great bodhisattva of indestructible nose, and the great bodhisattva of indestructible tongue, [11] the assembled host of the queen of time past, the one of time present, the one of time future, and the one of time unpredictable. [12]

There was the great subjugator of indestructible contact. the great subjugator of the indestructible subject of contact. the great subjugator of the indestructible object of contact, and the great subjugator of the indestructible consciousness of contact. [13] There was the queen who is not eternal. the one who is not transient, the one who is selfless, and the one who is signless. The assembly (in maṇḍalas) such as this is inexpressible, and present without duality. [14]

Then this secret description of these secret maṇḍalas, in which a the Tathāgatas and the assembled host of their queens are without duality, emerged from the indestructible Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities: [15]

E, Ema, Emaho!

Holding sway over the very expanse of the real.

The maṇḍala of pristine cognition has a disposition of spirituality. [16]

This self-manifesting nature, radiant in its images

Of contemplation and its pure magical display, [17]

Is a wish-fulfilling gem or enlightened attribute

Of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities.

Where there is nothing to be dispelled.

It itself is the abode of supreme indestructible reality.

The inexhaustible wheel of adornment.

—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged. [18] This completes the first chapter from the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the Introductory Scene. [19]

Text 1.1 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.1]

Thus, at the time of this explanation, [1] ...

[Tibetan]

'di-skad bshad-pa'i dus-na / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (16.4-97.6)]

The first of these subdivisions (i.e. concerning the buddha-body of reality) is in three parts, namely, a brief teaching on the introductory scene in terms of its excellence, a detailed exegesis of its nature, and a synopsis of pristine cognition's self-manifesting array.

[Brief Teachine on the Introductory Scene (16.4-28.2)]

The first (comments on Ch. 1.1). It comprises both an exegesis of the essence (of this line) and a refutation of misconceptions.

The former has three aspects, among which the first is the explanation of (this line) according to the introductory scene which is found in the outer tantras:[1] This should be understood in accordance with the (Introductory Sanskrit) words E-vaṃ ma-yā. E-vaṃ are the syllables of the

expanse from which all syllables emerge, and so (their Tibetan equivalents) 'di-skad. "thus", point towards the subsequent emergence (of this tantra-text). Mayā is the (Sanskrit) term from which the meanings of natural expression. Illusion, self, emergence and so forth are derived.[2] However in this context it holds the sense of "emergence", indicating the time of this explanation (bshad-pa'i dus).

Now. thus ('di-skad) refers to the excellence of the doctrine—In this esse the extensive lower tantras. Explanation (bshad-pa) is held to refer to the excellence of the teacher, namely the compiler. And the excellence of retinue, i.e. his attendants, is also implicitly indicated in the words of this explanation (bshad-pa'i). However, the (commonly cited) words I have heard (bdag-gis thos-pa) are not uttered on this occasion because there is no dichotomy between self and others. The words have heard (thos-pa) Indicate that there is 8 difference between the teacher and the retinue, whereas during the compilation of this (tantra), the teacher himself appears as the Lord of Secrets (Vajrapāṇi) and explains in this world at the present time the very teaching which he previously gave in Akaniṣṭha. He is revealed to surpass ordinary compilers such as the elder (sthavira) Kāśyapa.[3]

On the subject of the compiler himself being the teacher, the Non-Dual Victor (T. 453) says:

One should know Vajrapāṇi to be the Tathāgata Samantabhadra, and the great Vajradhara to be none other than he. Otherwise, who could say that the inconceivable vehicles have been comprehended at any one particular moment in time?[4]

The Verification of Secrets (T. 2217) also says:

The teacher of tantra is the indestructible reality of mind.
It is the teacher as well as compiler.[5]

And in the glorious Hevajratantra (T. 417-8):

I am the teacher, and I am the doctrine.
Endowed with my own assembly, I am even the listener.[6]

The words at the time of (dus-na) refer to the excellence of time. the nature of which is a pristine cognition of sameness with respect to the four times, without duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Similarly. at the time when the teacher. doctrine and retinue appear. there is undoubtedly a location as well. and as such, Akaniṣṭha is implicitly indicated.

If you ask, on the other hand, why the words on a certain occasion (dus-gcig-na) are not to be seen, just as they are found in other texts, the point is that in the field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture the doctrine is taught in a perpetual continuous cycle, transcending those (doctrines) which are identified by the words on a certain occasion. This surpasses the doctrines of the emanational body which are taught at certain times only,

and in accordance with the statement, “It is because the common (teachings) rarely emerge”. [7]

The second aspect is the exegesis (of this line) in accordance with the “enlightened mind” or seminal point (byang-chub sems), which is expounded in the inner (path of skillful means): [8] The location is the secret centre of the female consort and the energy channels of the four centres (within the body). The teacher, i.e. male & female consorts, refers to the white and red pure-essences (or seminal fluids) and to the vital energy of pristine cognition. The retinue is the accompanying experience of the sixteen delights. And the time is the time of inconceivable transformation through the crown-centre. [9]

Concerning this, the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) also says:

[As for the word “thus”],
'di indicates the location.
Endowed with the shapes of the four syllables,
Beginning with the syllable E:
And skad refers to the teacher Endowed with the seminal points.
In the shape of the syllable Vaṃ.
Which comprises the consonantal syllables.
This explanation (bshad) is upheld
By clear understanding in those of worthy consciousness
Whose “minds are controlled” (madamanu).
The possessive affix -pa refers to this tantra
Of ultimate definitive meaning.
Belonging to this supreme “vehicle” (yāna).
The “time” (dus) refers to Inconceivable time,
And [the affix na] gives name (nāma) to it. [10]

The syllables beginning with E indicate the form of the female consort's secret centre. the locations (or hearths) for the four rites and the four energy centres (in the body). skad means instantaneous. It refers to the skillful means, symbolised by the “consonantal syllables” during the experience of great delight: The white seminal point. in form of the syllable Vaṃ, is ejected on to the tip of the gem (penis), thereby conferring bliss on the female consort, while the red seminal point of the female consort confers bliss on the male consort. By exercising control of mind, the vital energy of the upper and lower doors (within the body) is bound. and pristine cognition is stabilised by its upward motion which internally fills the four energy centres. The worthy ones are such fortunate beings, and the possessive affix -pa refers to ultimate reality, the pristine cognition where bliss and emptiness are without duality, which is this yāna or supreme vehicle. It is perceived in Inconceivable time (dus). Thus, nāma indicates that this is the very excellence of great pristine cognition. [11]

The third aspect is the explanation (of this line) which accords with the secret inner radiance: [12] The location is the dark blue energy channel of life Itself within the eight-faceted precious gem of the heart-centre. Separating from it, in the manner of (the strands of) a yak-hair tent rope, are the white energy channel of water in the east, the yellow energy channel of earth in the south, the red energy channel of fire in the west,

and the green energy channel of air in the north. And within it, there abides a single seminal point of relative appearance, the size of a mustard seed.

Thus the teacher appears as the naturally present five pristine cognitions in their distinct and respective colours. and as the five conflicting emotions which are the natural energy of buddha-mind. endowed with the five pristine cognitions. His essence is emptiness. his natural expression is radiance. and the glow of his spirituality is unimpeded.[13]

The retinue refers to the energy channels which entirely pervade the upper and lower (doors) of the body. emanating from those (aforementioned) energy channels and seminal point. in the midst of five (coloured) lights. these naturally radiate as the buddha-body and pristine cognition of the enlightened families.

The time is a time of sameness with respect to the three times. This is provisionally because the body and its dependently arising sense-organs are complete. and dispositionally because there is no change throughout the three times.

The doctrine is pristine cognition free from conceptual elaboration, (the coalescence of) emptiness and radiance. The vital energy of great pristine cognition is retained within the upper and lower (doors of the body) and manifests in and of itself when all erratic movements of the vital energy of deeds have been Impeded. At the moment of death it is actualised because the thought arises that consciousness is riding on the vital energy. At that time the Akaniṣṭha realm. the maṇḍala of indestructible reality's expanse, is supported from the heart-centre. Manifesting in and of Itself, it is recognised to be Akaniṣṭha, and so one is liberated.[14]

In the words of the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The location of doctrine, dharmacakra (i.e. heart-centre)
Abides as four (coloured) lights in the shapes
Of the syllables beginning with E:
The imperishable seminal point in the shape
Of the syllable Vaṃ
Is identified as bliss, radiant of its own accord.[15]
The fourfold consciousness including the “intellect” (manu)
Is the subject of this concise explanation
Made through the experience of pristine cognition.
Pristine cognition, arising in the form of space,
Is the profound “ultimate” truth (paramārtha).
The very “moment” of bliss, free from extremes.[16]
Is the essence of all the three times.

The dharmacakra or doctrinal wheel is in the heart-centre, in the form of four (coloured) lights. in this context, the all-pervasive dark blue (light) is not limited as form because it is the basis for (the other four) which do arise. The white (light) is crescent-shaped, the yellow one square, the red one circular, and the green one triangular. Their support (i.e. the teacher)

is the circular seminal point in form of the syllable Vam.

Concerning the four kinds (of consciousness) including the intellect (which form the retinue): the ground-of-all in the centre is the basis from which there respectively arise: the consciousness of the ground-of-all in the east, the consciousness of the intellect in the south, the intellect endowed with conflicting emotions in the west, and the consciousness of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body in the north. The ground-of-all is the invisible support,[17] on which the four aggregates of consciousness depend. Their essences abide respectively from the present moment as the five pristine cognitions, and, through recognising them as such, conflicting emotions are Inherently purified without having been renounced.[18] This is called the Buddha-mind of the conquerors because the natural energy of the five pristine cognitions is perfected. The essence of pristine cognition is the nature of space, the object (of its spirituality) is without duality, and its natural expression never changes or alters.[19]

This Introductory scene is itself most precious because it necessitates at all times the knowledge of the apparent and abiding natures of primordial Buddha-hood, the three buddha-bodies. Although in the common tantras it is held that pure pristine cognition (is attained) by an impure being who has refined the ground of refinement, the Secret Magical Net holds everything to abide in a single nature of purity. For sentient beings the limits of perception are the dreamlike appearances of the mind, but for buddhas perception is the display of pristine cognition which appears in Akaniṣṭha itself. Although there are ostensible impure appearances when the self-manifesting essence of sentient beings is grasped within the subject-object dichotomy, impurity actually has no Individual characteristic, just as a conch shell may appear yellow. Furthermore, just as the yellow image of a conch shell is understood to be the choleric image of an eye, dualistic clinging is understood within the three kinds of maṇḍala to be non-dual pristine cognition.[20] Therefore, while impurity ostensibly appears it is in fact purity itself and not impurity. And it is through the generation of the subject-object dichotomy in relation to purity that impurity is said to arise.

The essence, unique pristine cognition, is purely perceived by buddhas. It is taintedly perceived by those on the path, and it is impurely perceived by sentient beings. In this respect, the very same element water is perceived by the different six classes of living beings as nectar, or as a mere potable drink, as puss, blood and so on. For those who abide in the pure lands it appears as supreme nectar and as the natural expression of the -doctrine. To awareness-holders who have obtained power with respect to the doctrine water itself appears as Māmaki. The effect of its moisture is Indeed produced, but it is experienced as the bliss of her display.[21] Contemplation is also transformed (on the buddha-level) because when dispositional propensities have utterly ceased they appear as a common savour in a disposition free from all conceptual elaborations. Even conceptual elaboration which does not manifest becomes quiescent. For example, when this world-system (of ours) is differently perceived as pure and impure, it is explained that purity and impurity appear to individual intellects but that otherwise Impurity does not externally exist as an individual characteristic.

Such is said in the Sūtra Vimalakīrti (T. 176):

The venerable Sāriputra said:—

I perceive this great world to be replete with mountainous heights and lowlands, pits of abyss and defilements.

Brahmā Sikhin who had come from a sorrowless Buddha-field said:—

I perceive this Buddha-field of the Transcendent Lord Śākyamuni itself to be utterly pure, like the excellent array of the divine paradise of the Paranirmittavaśavartins. Then the Transcendent Lord indicated the nature of this Buddha-field to the maṇḍalas of his retinue, so that everyone perceived it to be utterly pure, as the field of the eastern Buddha (Akṣobhya) which is the Ornamental Array of Precious Gems.

At that time the Transcendent Lord said:

This Buddha-field of mine is always pure. but you people do not perceive it as such.

Thus one should know this distinction (between buddhas and sentient beings) is made in accordance with purity and impurity of perception.

Now, while impurity does not appear to the Buddhas, there is a Sūtra which says:[22]

When I perceive things totally with unobscured Buddha-eyes, I know pure and impure world-systems, sentient beings of supreme acumen and those who are not supreme, genuinely, just as they are.

Are these statements, you may ask, contradictory? There are some who dwell in a mansion of precious gemstones when they are not asleep and some who do so when they are asleep. Among them, in the case of dreams, when purity and impurity are differently discerned by means of individual perception, to those who are not asleep it is as if emanations have been conjured up before those (dreamers). They would then say, “O! It is in this way that all things are essenceless, impermanent, illusory and naturally pure.” And, “Yours is an appearance of the sleep of ignorance, non-existent in reality.” Then, in the manner of one who applies the means of gradually awakening (those dreamers) from sleep, the Buddhas cognise (Impurity), but are without it in their own perception, dust like those who do abide in a mansion of gemstones.

The latter (see p. 336) is a refutation of misconceptions held by other traditions (concerning the introductory scene): There are those who lack the fortune to perceive the profound reality, their eyes of intelligence covered by an erroneous film, who say, “In this text of yours the words Thus have I heard on a certain occasion are not expressed. Therefore it is flawed in having an erroneous Introductory scene.”[23]

There are two responses to this, the first of which is made according to

the logical reasoning of similarity. in this case it is Implicit that the Root Tantra of Cakrasaṃvara (T. 368) which begins:

Then the mystery is to be explained...

And the Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) which begins:

Then glorious Vajradhara...

Would also be inauthentic because their introductory scenes would also be erroneous.

The second is the uncommon genuine response, namely, that the words Thus have I heard are found in transmitted precepts and ordinary tantras which were occasionally delivered by the emanational body. (In these texts) the teacher and the compiler are different. Their doctrines too are revealed to be occasional because they belong to diverse vehicles. However in this (Secret Nucleus) during the teaching of the uncommon Buddha-body of perfect rapture, the teacher is held to be the uncommon teacher, glorious Samantabhadra, the lord of indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times, the natural expression of all things. the original manifest Buddha-hood. This indeed does not accord with the teacher of manifest Buddhahood who has refined the path as an individual with a distinct mental continuum.[24] The uncommon location is Akaniṣṭha, the expanse of reality, the nucleus or self-manifest maṇḍala of enlightenment which is unlimited in dimension and extent because it is not confined within the continuum of the ten directions. It is not a delineated location because it is not within the perceptual range of beings other than the teacher himself who emanates as great self-manifest pristine cognition. The uncommon time is sameness with respect to the four times: It is present in an unchanging disposition as the buddha-body, speech and mind, the actual ornaments of the spontaneous Bounteous Array. It does not however include past, future, and present or indivisible time moments, instants, moments, years, and months. The excellently endowed texts of tantra reveal all things of saṃsāra and nirvana to be spontaneously present in the essence of primordial manifest awakening. They do not teach that the nature (of all things) is divided according to the diverse dichotomies of cause and result, good and evil, acceptance and rejection, and so forth.

Furthermore, extending beyond the scope of the common vehicles, the uncommon vehicle expresses no erroneous faults because its structure is quite different.

The Commentary on the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3799) concurs in the words:

This is another structure entirely.

Therefore one should never speak to refute it

Dependent on the tradition of another vehicle.

Accordingly, while it is necessary for those of unobscured omniscient vision and for great sublime beings[25] and those who comprehend all

topics of logical reasoning to comprehend doctrines as authentic or unauthentic, just as they are, it is improper for you to apply structures of being and non-being to the enumerations of the sky-like doctrine because your perception is minute in its vision like the consciousness of a cowherd. The doctrine of the buddhas is inconceivable. It transcends the range of inhibited perception because it is unlimited. Sometimes it is even proper to rely on the teaching given by Māra; for in the Sūtra the Cornucopia Avalokiteśvara's Attributes (T. 116) the evil Māra, seated on a throne of precious gems, establishes that particular doctrinal teaching to be a sūtra of the Buddha. There are immeasurable effects for one who would depreciate such great mysteries.[26]

It is said in a Sūtra:

The effect of one who has accumulated deeds rejected by the
Doctrine is immeasurable and inconceivable.
Having been born in the great hells as a sentient denizen of Avici,
And having passed an aeon subdued by fire therein,
One proceeds to the great hells of other world systems and so on.
(The effect) is said to endure for aeons such as these
Which are as vast as the Ganges River in the ten directions.

And also in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Whoever in the repeated service of an evil associate
Harbours evil thoughts towards the buddhas
And who would amass the most prohibited acts[27] —
Killing father, mother or arhat—
Is swiftly released from that condition
Having reflected on the definitive reality.
But how is a mind which hates the doctrine
To be released from that condition.

Briefly, one should apprehend one's own doctrine with confidence, but never depreciate the doctrine of another.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The three classes of outer tantra (phyi-rgyud-sde gsum), namely, Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra (or Caryātantra) and Yogatantra, are discussed in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 152a-154b, 211b-219b.

[2]:

The author, pp. 337-338, differentiates between the general interpretation of the Sūtras which derives this expression from Sanskrit mayā, and the particular interpretation of this text which, in his view, infers Sanskrit māyā.

[3]:

On the sthavira Kāśyapa, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 46-49, and on the

lineage of the śhāviras who largely transmitted the texts of Hīnayāna, see HBI, pp. 226-236.

[4]:

According to this view, it is because the tantras were given atemporally in Akaniṣṭha that they could then be comprehended mundanely at a specific point in time. See also below, pp. 362-363, the quotation from the Ghanavyūhasūtra (T. 110); also Laṅkāvatārasūtra. T. 107, Ch. 10, v. 38ab + 39cd; and NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 15-16.

[5]:

On this quotation, see above, p. 157, note 115.

[6]:

See also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 69.

[7]:

It is certainly the case that from the eighth century onwards when the early translations were made, the Anuttarayogatantras were widespread, while other classes of tantra were rarely studied. Cf. the contents of the bka'-'gyur and the rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum. where Anuttarayoga-tantras predominate.

[8]:

Tibetan nang-ltar. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch 1, p. 52, reads nang thabs-lam. which accords with the present explanation.

[9]:

The practice associated with the control of energy channels, currents and seminal points (rtsa-rlung thig-le) and with the consequent experience of the sixteen delights is described below in great detail. Ch. 11, pp. 899-914, and Ch. 13, pp. 1006-1022. The “time of inconceivable transformation through the crown-centre” refers to the conclusion of this practice, whereupon the body is pervaded by bliss and pristine cognition—see below, p. 909.

[10]:

This hermeneutical interpretation includes the Sanskrit Evaṃ mayā and the Tibetan 'di-skad bshad-pa'i dus-na. Mayā is interpreted as a combination of madamanu (Tibetan sdom-byed yid) and yāna (Tibetan theg-pa). The affix -pa indicates ultimate reality (Sanskrit paramārtha). See also Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch 1, p. 56

[11]:

See also Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit.. pp. 56-57- On the four kinds of

activity or rite (las-bzhi) corresponding to the syllables *Evam Mayā*, see below. Ch. 9, pp. 783-786; Ch. 20, pp. 1258-1266. The four energy centres in the body are those referred to as the “upper gate” (steng-sgo), in contrast to the sexual centre or “lower gate” (’og-sgo). See Ch. 11, pp. 899-914.

[12]:

The secret inner radiance (gsang-ba ’od-gsal) refers to the technique of All-surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal) In the Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen). For a detailed explanation, see below. Ch. 13, pp. 1022-1044.

[13]:

As expounded in a great many tantra-texts and treatises of rdzogs-pa chen-po, the ground is considered in terms of essence (ngo-bo), natural expression (rang-bzhin) and spirituality (thugs-rje), which respectively indicate the Trikāya.

[14]:

The fusion of consciousness with the vital energy of pristine cognition (ye-shes-kyi rlung) at the moment of death is referred to in texts such as the bar-do thos-grol. See also below, Ch. 13, pp. 1039-1040. On the status of the maṇḍalas of the peaceful and wrathful deities in the heart and crown centres respectively, see below. Ch. 1, pp. 403-404, Ch. 13, pp. 1022-100, and Ch. 15, pp. 1078ff.

[15]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch. 1, pp. 55-56, where this line is clearly interpreted to mean that the seminal point in the form of the syllable *vaṃ* is blissful and radiant of its own accord (rang-gis rang-la bde-ba gsal-bar ston-pa) rather than in an extraneous manner. kLong-chen-pa, phyogs-bcu mun-sel. p. 21, does not fully explain this line.

[16]:

Tibetan mtha’-bral phyir. Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch 1, p. 54: snga-phyi-bral, i.e., free from past and future time.

[17]:

Tibetan kun-gzhi lung ma-bstan rten yin. For an explanation of these aggregates of consciousness, viz. kun-gzhi rnam-par shes-pa, yid-kyi rnam-par shes-pa, nyon-mong-gi rnam-par shes-pa, and sgo-lnga’i rnam-par shes-pa see below, pp. 417-418; and on their inherent purity, pp. 394-5 and 1170-1171; also see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, p. 4bff.

[18]:

Tibetan ma-spangs gnas-su dag-pa. The Inherent purity of saṃsāra is at the heart of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's treatise. On the term “inherent

purity”, see also below, Ch. 5, p. 606.

[19]:

Tibetan don gnyis-su med-pa. On this trio of essence, spirituality and natural expression, see above note 13.

[20]:

I.e. the maṇḍalas of ground, path and result. See above, PP. 59-61.

[21]:

Tibetan rol-pa'i bde-ba. See below. Ch. 11, pp. 899-914 for the implication of this term in sbyor-ba practices. Also, on the purity of the elements, see Ch. 5, p. 606.

[22]:

N.L.

[23]:

Tibetan bdag-gis thos-pa dus-gcig-na. On this controversy, see above, pp. 63-67, 337-338.

[24]:

The Vaibhāṣika view expressed in the Abhidharmakośa, Ch. 6, v. 24ab, holds Śākyamuni to have been an ordinary individual until the moment of his enlightenment rather than an expression of the nirmāṇakāya. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 13

[25]:

I.e. buddhas who have “unobscured omniscient vision” and bodhisattvas who are “sublime beings”. On the term “sublime”, see above, foreward and title, note 15.

[26]:

N.L.

[27]:

Tibetan bya-ba min-byed mchog-tshogs. Cf. the translation in K. Holmes and Khenpo T. Gyamtso. The Changeless Nature. p. 82.

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... the Tathāgata, genuinely perfect Buddha and transcendent lord, was endowed with great rapture which Is the Identity of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times. This is the nature in which all of them without exception, none excepted and omitting none at all, are Indivisible, without distinction or difference. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin gshegs-pa yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas bcom-ldan-'das / longs-spyod chen-po phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje'i bdag-nyid / ma-lus mi-lus lus-pa med-pa thams-cad-dang so-so ma-yin tha-mi-dad dbyer-med-pa'i rang-bzhin-te / [2]

Commentary:

[Detailed Exegesis of the Introductory Scene (28.2-94.4)]

The second part (see p. 336), the detailed exegesis of the Introductory scene, comprises a brief teaching on the nature of perfect rapture which is the essence of the Teacher and a detailed exegesis of the classification of this perfect rapture.

[Brief Teaching on the Nature of Perfect Rapture (28.3-34.2)]

The former (comments on Ch. 1, 2): The Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) is so named because once power has been obtained over the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) of the buddha-body of reality, which like space is without extremes of conceptual elaboration, the four other buddha-bodies always spontaneously emerge (gshegs-pa) because their activity conforms with the buddha-body of 28 reality, the nature of space.

As is said in the Sūtra of Inconceivable Secrets from the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 47):

All that is pervaded by space
Is also pervaded by buddha-body
And is also pervaded by light.
All that is pervaded by light
Is also pervaded by buddha-speech.
All that is pervaded by buddha-speech
Is also pervaded by buddha-mind.

Elsewhere, (the word Tathāgata) is explained to mean one who has departed (gshegs-pa) in the wake of the conquerors of the past, one who has departed (gshegs-pa) having enjoyed through skillful means the appearance of desired attributes just as (de-bzhin) they appear, or one who has emerged (gshegs-pa) in accordance with (de-bzhin) womb-birth corresponding to the aspirations of the sentient beings of the four modes of

birth, and so forth.[1] Although these definitions correspond to the gradual stages of the path pursued by the emanational buddha-body, Tathāgata is not, however, interpreted as such in this context.

As for the expression genuinely perfect buddha (yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas): The identity in whom all enlightened attributes, the ornamental wheels of buddha-body, speech and mind, are without exception genuinely perfect (yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa) is the teacher or buddha, cleansed (sangs) of the sleep of ignorance and vast (rgyas) in excellent intelligence with respect to all activities.

As is said in the Seventy Verses on Going for Refuge (T. 3971):

Because the sleep of ignorance has been cleansed
And because intelligence is vast with respect to the knowable.
The Buddha is vast as the petals of a lotus.

And in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):

Ignorance itself radiates as pristine cognition.
Conflicting emotions become enlightenment
And suffering supreme (bliss).

As for the term transcendent lord (bcom-ldan-'das): The nature of this teacher is such that the four demons are primordially subdued (bcom), the six attributes of greatness are possessed (ldan) and sorrow is transcended ('das) without abiding. As to the way in which the four demons are subdued: The demon of conflicting emotions is subdued because the nature of the five conflicting emotions is primordially present as the five pristine cognitions, so that they are neither to be accepted nor rejected. Then the demon of the lord of death is subdued because without conflicting emotions one is not born in saṃsāra, and for one who is not born there is no death. The demon of the components is subdued because if there is no death the components are not aggregated. The demon of the divine prince is subdued because the phenomena which would cause obstruction do no harm.

Now, the transcendence of sorrow without abiding (mi-gnas-pa'i myanngan-las-'das) is the rank of Samantabhadra, spontaneously and naturally present for the sake of living beings because he does not abide in extremes of existence and quiescence. It is incorrect (as some declare) that the word transcendent ('das) was added by the Tibetans and does not exist in the Sanskrit (equivalent—i.e. Bhagavān). For it is taught that one who has accomplished the sense of the word bhaga takes recourse to both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and does not abide in their extremes.

It is said that the Teacher was endowed with great rapture (longs-spyod chen-po) because, without regard for location, retinue and other such (excellencies), he is spontaneously present in a magical display of contemplation as the nature of self-manifesting pristine cognition. This surpasses those other excellent endowments of the emanational body and so forth which are ordinary and therefore not the great rapture.[2]

This very intention of the self-manifesting Buddha-body of perfect rapture is revealed to be all-pervasive and not different from the nature of all things. It is the great identity (bdag-nyid)[3] of the Indestructible (rdorje) body (sku-dang), indestructible speech (gsung-dang) and indestructible mind (thugs) of all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi), such as Akṣobhya and Dīpaṃkara who reside in the expanse of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu) of space such as Abhirati in the east, and of the four times (dus-bzhi)—past, present, future and indefinite. It is undifferentiated and without distinction (so-so ma-yin) from the intention of all excellencies of the buddha-body of reality without exception (ma-lus). of all excellencies of the buddha-body of perfect rapture none excepted (mi-lus), and of all excellencies of the emanational buddha-body omitting none at all (lus-pa med-pa). Without difference (tha-mi-dad) in essence, it is the nature (rang-bzhin) indivisible (dbyer-med) with respect to reality because it is spontaneously present. without conjunction or disjunction from the beginning.

There are some who explain that in this text reality is all-pervasive, uniting both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and who do not even provisionally perceive discrimination between them. On this very point, there are those who gird the solid mountain of wrong view with a dense forest of error saying, “This text is erroneous with respect to time because there are explained to be four times whereas in all other (texts) no more than three times are mentioned”. There are however some piṭakas which speak of the four times as the perfect age, the third age, the second age and the degenerate age; and in the Treasury of the Abhidharma (T. 4089) there is mention of the four processes of creation, stability, destruction and dissolution. The Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) also speaks of four times, namely, past, future, present and inconceivable. If these texts were also held to be erroneous deviations, so would their doctrines.[4]

Indefinite time (i.e. the fourth time) is held by some to mean that the seed of a sentient being is transformed into a buddha once the doctrine has been studied and experientially cultivated; but that it abides in saṃsāra when there has been no experiential cultivation. However this fusion (of sentient being and buddha) occurs (not in indefinite time but) in future time. When liberated by the teaching of the doctrine one does not, even for an instant, forget the spirituality of the buddhas, but is certain to teach in forms which grant appropriate instruction.

It says in the Hundred Parables on Deeds (T. 340):

The ocean domain of sea monsters
May well pass beyond time.
But for the sake of his sons requiring training.
The Buddha will not pass beyond time.

There are indeed no sentient beings who are untrained by the Buddhas. The Intermediate Mother (T. 9) says:

Subhūti, in the world-system of sentient beings there are no sentient beings untrained by the Tathāgata. However, you may ask, is it not said in the Sūtra Which Dispels the Grief of Ajātaśatru (T. 216) that beings are

trained by pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and bodhisattvas but not by the Tathāgata, as for example when Mañjuśrī utters the eulogy and when Udāyī is sent to instruct King; Śuddhodana? That is not the case: Those (Bodhisattvas and pious attendants) acted on behalf of others having been encouraged to do so through the Tathāgata's spirituality. Thus they performed acts of benefit, some directly, some indirectly and some through diverse emanations. These acts of benefit were performed because the Sugata had conferred the empowerment of great light rays ('od-zer chen-po'i dbang-bskur) and so forth on the conquerors' sons who had obtained the (bodhisattva-) levels. What else is there to say?

Similar passages are also found in the Sūtra of Compassion's White Lotus (T. 112):

Śāriputra, in this respect, the instruction, excellent description and mental training which are observed to some extent by ordinary persons, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and bodhisattvas who have attained empowerment are the blessing of the Tathāgata, the power of his spirituality.

Again, there are some who perceive incorrectly, holding the fourfold process of destruction, creation, dissolution and stability to be the four times. This is because the nature of Buddha-body, speech and mind—the inexhaustible wheels of adornment which belong to Akaniṣṭha and are uninterrupted in time—is not gathered within that process, and because, apart from phenomena which are created, preserved and destroyed, the process does not include the time when there is neither creation nor destruction.

In this, our (rNying-ma) tradition however, the three divisions of past, future and present are compounded time or relative appearances, whereas the unchanging reality is indefinite or the time of inconceivable ultimate reality.

When indefinite time is classified, it has three aspects, among which the first is the indefinite time of the ground. This refers to the originally pure mind-as-such and the reality or real nature of all things.

The Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) says:

Kāśyapa, the real nature of mind and phenomena is indefinite or inconceivable in time because it does not abide in any past, future or present dimension.

(Secondly), the indefinite time of the path refers to the genuine Intelligence of the yogin who realises during meditative absorption that all things subsumed by the three times are uncreated.

The Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) says:

He who realises that the three times are timeless...

(Thirdly), the indefinite time of the result is present in a perpetual

continuous cycle because it is unchanging in the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array. It is said in the Tantra of the Awakening of Vairocana (T. 494):

The great appearance of pristine cognition occurs in unwavering time because it is naturally radiant.

So it is that all things are gathered within the essence of the four times.

[Detailed Exegesis of the Classification of Perfect Rapture (34.2-94.4)]

The latter (see p. 350) is the detailed exegesis of the classification of perfect rapture which has three parts. namely, the detailed exegeses of the excellent location, teacher and retinue.

[The Excellent Location (34.3-60.4)]:

The excellent location comprises an overview and an interlinear commentary; and the former (34.3-46.2) has four sections: verbal definition, characteristic, classification and rejection of disputations concerning it.

i. (The Sanskrit term) Akaniṣṭha means “highest” or “that which is not base or lower.”

ii. The unique characteristic of Akaniṣṭha is that there are no other locations surpassing that in which one then abides. Now, the characteristic of the Akaniṣṭha or highest location of the buddha-body of reality is that it is the supporting ground from which the two buddha-bodies of form arise. the conclusive location to be reached. The characteristic (of the Akaniṣṭha or highest location) of the buddha-body of perfect rapture is that it is the supporting ground from which the emanational body arises and continues to appear, endowed with the five certainties. The characteristic (of the Akaniṣṭha or highest location) of the emanational body is that it is supreme among all the locations which appear in the world-system and it is the highest of the five kinds of pure abode (śuddhanivāsa).[5] The distinction between the world-systems or fields of sentient beings and the pure lands or fields (of the buddhas) is one that is made between the field of training through the emanational body and the fields of the body of perfect rapture and the body of reality.

iii. The classification has three aspects: the Akaniṣṭha or highest location of the body of reality, of the body of perfect rapture and of the emanational body. The first is not located in any spatial direction, peripheral or central. It is the essence free from all conceptual elaboration, the genuine conclusive goal of the buddhas; and it is called the Akaniṣṭha or highest location of genuine meaning.

Such is also said in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

The location of the Teacher, the Buddha-body of reality, is as follows: Akaniṣṭha, the palace of reality's expanse.

Is explained to be the highest location of genuine meaning.

The Akaniṣṭha of the body of perfect rapture appears as a celestial palace of light along with its central deity and retinue. It is naturally produced as an appearance of great pristine cognition from the expanse of the buddha-body of reality. Spontaneously present as the enlightened family endowed with the five pristine cognitions, it is unchanging at all times.

The Indestructible Reality of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje, NGB. Vol 15) says:

Abandoning the Pure Abode.

In the supreme realm of Great Akaniṣṭha
Is the spontaneously present body of the
Lord of the enlightened families, with his mudrā.
Transcending unity and diversity, this is
The common form of all the Buddhas.
He is the original treasure of the greater vehicle
Who appears at each instant to those disciples
Who have abandoned all obscurations.[6]

The words “abandoning the Pure Abode” here indicate that it (i.e. the realms of pure form) is transcended. Surpassing mundane appearances. that which is present within its display is indefinite because it manifests in and of itself wherever the buddhas reside.

It says in the Aspiration of Good Conduct (T. 44: 1095):

On the surface of a single atom
Are as many buddhas as there are atoms.

Therefore, do not think that he does not reside within a single atomic particle. Therein the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array unimpededly appears, and, apart from that, there is no need to search for this location as one that is spatially limited by the intellect. One should know that wherever the distinctions of enlightened attributes appear through the power of pure reality's expanse, they themselves are the maṇḍala of the conquerors.

This location is called the Great Akaniṣṭha ('og-min chen-po) because it contains no extraneous raptures apart from the display of buddha-hood. Therein Vairocana and the enlightened family of the Tathāgata, Akṣobhya and the enlightened family of indestructible reality, Ratnaśaṃbhava and the enlightened family of precious gems, Amitābha and the enlightened family of the lotus, and Amoghasiddhi and the enlightened family of activity are spontaneously present. manifest in and of themselves in the infinity of celestial expanse in their respective maṇḍala-clusters.

These apparitional Buddha-bodies and the appearances of pristine cognition are not at all identical because they appear to be diverse. But nor do they form a multiplicity because they are self-manifestations of that same buddha-body of perfect rapture.

This field and its appearances as buddha-body and pristine cognition comprise the common form of the body of perfect rapture of all the buddhas, manifest in and of itself. They are not within the perceptual range of all, but appear in conformity with (the perception of) all buddha-bodies of perfect rapture. in this way. the central deities and their retinues which appear are a treasure of the uncommon doctrines of the greater vehicle; for they are the disposition of the buddha-body of perfect rapture. When all obscurations have been abandoned, this apparition also appears instantly as the buddha-body of reality, without dichotomy of past and future.

The words “who appears to those disciples” indicate that he is not within the perceptual range of those who have obtained the (bodhisattva) levels because they have incompletely “abandoned all obscurations.”

As for the appearance of enlightened attributes in this location, the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) says:

Estimated as twice the size
Of the mundane Akaniṣṭha.
Its essence transcends the three extremes.
And it is the identity of the five enlightened attributes.
Perfect in its adornments which are not to be renounced.
The celestial palace is located.
Square in shape, with a central roof.

Because (this Great Akaniṣṭha) is the pure field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture which manifests in and of itself, its appearance is superior to both the Akaniṣṭha of the pure abodes and to the Akaniṣṭha of the emanational body of natural expression who appears terrestrially. The essence of this buddha-field transcends the three extremes, namely those of being and nonbeing, eternalism and nihilism, and conceptual elaboration. Endowed with the natural expression of five enlightened attributes—the inexhaustible wheels of adornment which are the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities—the celestial palace bedecked with perfect ornaments of appearance appears throughout the expanse of space.

Furthermore, It is in this location where expanse and pristine cognition merge without duality that the apparitional nature of the buddha-body of perfect rapture itself arises.

The Eulogy to the Expanse of Reality (T. 1118) says:

I speak having merged three things together:
The supreme location of the mighty lord.
The beautiful forms of Akaniṣṭha, and consciousness.

The mighty lord here refers to the buddha-body of perfect rapture because he holds sway over the genuine properties of all things. Because this nature is common to all the bodies of perfect rapture of all the buddhas, there are no dissimilar or different appearances which are established. However the fields of the body of perfect rapture have simply been distinguished in accordance with those aspects of the body of perfect

rapture through which the respective conquerors obtained enlightenment.

The Collection of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4048) says:

Because there is no apprehension of self
There are no differences within this location.
But it is differently named in accordance with
Those who pursued it in the past.

If Buddha-hood has not been obtained in this way in the self-manifesting field of the body of perfect rapture, it is Impossible to array the lamp (of enlightenment) in the world and then act on behalf of living beings.

It says in the Sūtra of the Bounteous Array (T. 110):

The perfect buddhas do not perform the buddhas' deeds In the realm of desire
Until they have attained Buddha-hood in Akaniṣṭha.

The conquerors of this (realm) transcend the three world-systems, so that their location is also described accordingly. As the same text says:

Transcending those locations
Which are the formless, desire and form (realms),
And similarly those which are perceived.
The power of the buddhas resides
In the maṇḍala of the Bounteous (Array).

In this location, in the pure self-manifesting maṇḍala, the natural Great Perfection or the excellent doctrine of Atiyoga is revealed through the buddha-mind of natural blessing to spiritual warriors by the Teacher Samantabhadra who himself appears as the body of perfect rapture.[7]

As our text says (Ch. 2, 17):

The Tathāgata himself purposefully conversed with the tathāgata himself.

Other texts also contain statements which conform to this.[8]

Thirdly, the Akaniṣṭha or highest location of the emanational body comprises both the field of the emanational body of natural expression which is revealed for the sake of terrestrial beings who require training, and the Akaniṣṭha of the Pure Abodes which is revealed for the sake of beings who combine both (celestial and terrestrial attributes). The former comprises the fields of the citadel of Akaniṣṭha or the Bounteous Array in the centre, of Abhirati in the east, of (Śrīmat) adorned with precious gems in the south, of Sukhāvati in the west, and of Karmaprasiddhi in the north. [9] in these five fields, to a retinue comprising bodhisattvas of the tenth level, the Teacher in form of the five enlightened families naturally manifests the common and uncommon doctrines of the greater vehicle

from his visage and the tip of his tongue, whence light rays are emanated. He is held to purify obscurations through his mirror-like appearance.

This text says (Ch. 6, 17-18):

In the supreme unsurpassed abode of Akaniṣṭha,
The buddha-body (is present) as Vairocana,
Who, to retinue of Bodhisattvas, does not divulge
The supreme Buddha-speech in that previous way.
But discloses through his buddha-body
The doctrines that are appraised.

Just as (when) exposed on a mirror
All actual sallowness (of complexion) can be removed.
When the retinue beholds the Buddha-body in this way.
The Inestimable depth of their obscurations to enlightenment
Appears on the Buddha-body, as on a mirror.
Then the ten levels are sequentially purified.
And unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained.

The time (when teaching is given in thia Akaniṣṭha of the emanational body) is a constant cycle or inexhaustible wheel of adornment.

In particular. the five enlightened families who form the maṇḍalas of the peaceful and wrathful deities manifestly appear and teach the vehicles of Yoga and Mahāyoga. The field (in which thia occurs) is also described as “the zenith” (steng) because it is supramundane.[10]

It is said in the All-Accomplishins King (T. 828):

The teacher reveals the location
Of the body of perfect rapture
To be the zenith of all symbolic worlds.
Among the locations, the celestial palace
Of the Akaniṣṭha citadel is explained
To be the highest of locations.

The retinue is also explained to comprise bodhisattvas or spiritual warriors.

As the same text says:

The retinue of the Teacher, the body of perfect rapture
Is as follows:
Those who have transcended the levels
Of the four kinds of conduct based on devotion.[11]
Who have dominion over the first (Bodhisattva)-level. The Joyful.
And then abide on the tenth level. Cloud of Doctrine,
Are revealed as the retinue of the buddha-body of perfect rapture.[12]

The doctrines (taught in thia context) are revealed to be the intention of buddha-body and pristine cognition.

The sane text says:

To the bodhisattvas of the tenth level
Who reside in Akaniṣṭha with the perfect
Rapture of pristine cognition.
The enlightened mind comprising buddha-body and
Pristine cognition is explained.

As for the way in which this is explained, it also says:

The buddha-body of perfect rapture teaches
Through its own essence.

The latter (see p. 364) concerns the Akaniṣṭha of the Pure Abodes which is revealed for (beings who) combine (celestial and terrestrial attributes): The supreme location which conforms to the perception of sentient beings of the six classes is the Akaniṣṭha or highest location of the five classes of deities of the Pure Abodes, associated with the fourth level of meditative concentration in the form-realms of their respective worldsystems, including this world of Patient Endurance (Sahālokadhātu). It is not a coarse material object, but a location formed of pure-essences. the nature of light, which is adorned with the various details of an array, including the celestial palace. Therein, the buddhas appear in the world, and at that time the foremost of emanations is revealed to be a buddha adorned with major and minor marks, whose doctrine conforms to that of the body of perfect rapture. That one then teaches in all directions in order to train the limitless deities, accomplished masters and mighty holders of gnostic mantras through the many vehicles of Kriyā, Caryā, Yogatantra and so forth, and (the causal vehicles) including the Transcendental Perfections.

Such is also said in the Tantra of Excellent Attainment (T. 807):

In beautiful Akaniṣṭha, among the Pure Abodes,
The mighty accomplished masters and so forth
Are satisfied by gnostic mantras, dhāraṇī mantras,
And yoga; and by many causal doctrines.[13]

Furthermore, it says in the Eye-Opening Commentary (P. 4756), which was composed by the master Buddhaguhya:[14]

The true Akaniṣṭha is the expanse of reality because it is the abode where all buddhas reside. and there is no other (location) higher than it. The conventional Akaniṣṭha appears in the shape and colour of the celestial palace, a symbol of the indivisibility of the expanse and pristine cognition because it is the location where the buddha-body of perfect rapture resides, and there is no other (location) higher than this symbol which illustrates the expanse of reality. The aware Akaniṣṭha is the pristine cognition of awareness which qualitatively realises the abiding nature of material substances because it is the location in which the body of reality resides. endowed with two purities,[15] and there is no other awareness higher than that. The secret Akaniṣṭha, the space (vagina) of the female consort, is the location where the secret buddha-body resides

because other than it there are no higher levels of the path or enlightened attributes. The conceptual Akaniṣṭha, that in which a novice meditates on the celestial palace of Akaniṣṭha, is the location where the maṇḍala of higher contemplation resides because there is no other conception higher than that which grasps the whole meaning. The mundane Akaniṣṭha is the apex for the five classes of deities belonging to the Pure Abodes and is the location in which sublime beings reside because there is no location higher than it within the form realm.

Although these six definitions of Akaniṣṭha are found, they are all gathered within the first. For the true Akaniṣṭha and the aware Akaniṣṭha are gathered in the buddha-body of reality; the symbolic Akaniṣṭha is gathered in the buddha-body of perfect rapture; and the other three kinds of Akaniṣṭha are gathered within the emanational body—the mundane Akaniṣṭha is material, while the secret and conceptual Akaniṣṭhas are gathered within that because therein the path of the emanational body is experientially cultivated.

iv. Concerning the rejection of disputations (with respect to the overview of the excellent location): It has been said that if there was no-one of independent mind to be trained in the field of the self-manifesting buddha-body of perfect rapture where the Magical Net (sgvu-'phrul) was taught, there would be no need to teach the doctrine; and (it has also been said that) the genuine and symbolic maṇḍalas which teach those requiring training would not have to teach the emanations of their own minds because these emanations would be without conceptualising thoughts. Therefore both the retinue and emanations must have Independent minds. This opinion indicates that you have not arrived at the intention (of the Buddhas).

It is because there are beings to be trained by the emanations that the doctrine had to be taught. The Lord of Secrets (Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi) was required to teach posterity. Furthermore, the genuine and symbolic (maṇḍalas) are not purposefully revealed to those who require training, but they arise manifest in and of themselves as the spontaneously perfect enlightened attributes of the buddha-body of perfect rapture, Just as a reflection appears on the surface of a mirror. The emanations who are indeed without conceptualising thought do possess pristine cognition, so it is through that that they hear and apprehend the doctrine. If emanations lacked the pristine cognition of awareness the defect would be implicit that Śākyamuni, the Lord of Secrets and others would also lack the pristine cognition which quantitatively knows (phenomena) and qualitatively knows (the view).[16]

Moreover, your argument may be refuted by literary sources such as the following:[17]

Derived from the distinctions of actual buddha-mind.
Is the self-manifesting mind of the conqueror and so forth.

And (Ch. 2. 17):

The Tathāgata purposefully conversed with the tathāgata himself.

And (Ch. 1, 16-17):

Holding sway over the very expanse of the real.
The maṇḍala of pristine cognition has a disposition of spirituality.
This self-manifesting nature, radiant in its images
Of contemplation and its pure magical display...

There are some who hold that the spiritual warriors mentioned in this (Tantra of the Secret Nucleus) are spiritual warriors of the tenth level. who do not direct their attention towards the spontaneous natural maṇḍala. However the central deity and the retinue do appear, and their essence is explained to be the disposition of the single savour of pristine cognition, neither positive nor negative, Just as frescoes (of a central deity and retinue) are painted on the single surface of a wall, or as (Images of) the central deity and retinue are fashioned from a single lump of gold.

There are also some who astonishingly hold that there are those to be trained, seated on thrones, who listen to the doctrine with an independent mind because (that teaching situation) is effected by their aspirations. These people have not understood the nature of the self-manifesting pristine cognition which arises symbolically. in short, the argument which purports that there are those to be trained with Independent minds in the field of the self-manifesting buddha-body of perfect rapture is farcical, a veritable monkey's dance. Briefly, the three buddha-bodies as well as their emanations and fields are inconceivable and limitless.

The Sūtra of Arrayed Bouquet (T. 44) says:

Even on a single tip of hair
Is an unthinkable array of fields.[18]
Though they have various shapes, they do not differ;
And they do not become intermingled.

Therefore, whatever is pervaded by space is pervaded by the buddha-body of reality and the buddha-body of perfect rapture; and whatever is pervaded by sentient beings is pervaded by the emanational body and its enlightened activity. There is neither bias nor partiality in the fields of the sugatas.

One should also realise that within this very field there are other inconceivable inexpressible qualities. Though it appears to be impure. it should be regarded as a pure field rather than (impure). as in one's own mere perception. One should know this circumstance of ours to resemble that of sunlight and moonlight which are Indeed without impurity, and yet not perceived by those who are born blind. This structure (of the excellent location of Akaniṣṭha), an extremely difficult topic, has been clearly revealed.

The latter (see p. 357) is the interlinear commentary (concerning the excellent location, 46.2-60.4). It is threefold: The field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture, the celestial palace, and the excellent array.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 1.3)]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These are the definitions accepted respectively by the Śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas among adherents of the causal vehicles. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 50a-60a, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 12-40. On the four modes of birth, see above, pp. 118, 173. note 207.

[2]:

As indicated above, p. 338, the *nirmāṇakāya* is said to give teaching at specific points in time with reference to a specific audience.

[3]:

The term “Great Identity” (*bdag-nyid chen-po*) in tantra-texts refers to the central Heruka figure. In the case of this text, it indicates either the male and female consort Samantabhadra (*kun-bzang yab-yum*) or their wrathful expression—*Che-mchog Heruka*. On the usage of this term as an axiom in *Mahāyoga*, see above, pp. 116, 173. note 204.

[4]:

Concerning this controversy of four times as opposed to three, see also above, pp. 67-68. On the four ages—viz. *kṛtayuga* (*rdzogs-ldan*), *tretayuga* (*gsum-ldan*), *dvāparayuga* (*gnyis-ldan*) and *kaliyuga* (*rtsod-ldan*), see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 151a, note; also A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, pp. 320-321. On this and other temporal structures, see R. Klotzli, *Buddhist Cosmology*.

[5]:

On the five pure abodes, viz. *Akaniṣṭha*, *Sudarśana*, *Sudṛṣa* [*Sudṛśa*?], *Atapa*, and *Avṛha*, which are regarded as the highest of seventeen form-realms (*rūpadhātu*) attained in consequence of the fourth meditative concentration (*dhyāna*). see the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction; also *ibid.*, pp. 10a-11b.

[6]:

This verse, which is explained in the following paragraphs, is derived from the *sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje*, i.e. the exegetical tantras of the *Māyājāla* cycle contained in NGB. Vol. 15. Cf. NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 68.

[7]:

On the role of Samantabhadra and his appearance as *Vajradhara*, the buddha-body of perfect rapture, in the intentional transmission (*dgongs-pa'i brgyud-pa*) of *rdzogs-pa chen-po*. see e.g., NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp.

[8]:

The self-manifesting nature of this communication is also revealed in passages such as the following (bder-' dus rtsa-rgyud. NGB. vol. 32): I am king of the great, And I am both teacher and listener.

[9]:

The highest of the śuddhanivāsa, on which see above note 33, is held to comprise these five fields corresponding to the four directions and centre. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 50aff.

[10]:

This is described, in nyi-zla kha-sbyor (NGB. vol. 9), as a “semi-manifest emanation of natural expression.” The distinctions between this level and the Akaniṣṭha of perfect rapture are also clarified in works such as Dharmamitra, Prasphuṭapadā. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 51. This is also referred to as the “special Akaniṣṭha”. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 67-68.

[11]:

Tibetan mos-spvod bzhi-yi-sa. This expression refers to the initial cultivation of enlightened mind through the paths of provision and connection (tshogs-sbyor lam-gnyis). According to bod-rgya tshig-mdzod chen-mo. these are said to resemble respectively earth, gold, full-moon, and fire. Alternatively, they are known as: attainment of light (snang-ba thob-pa. Sanskrit ālokalābha). Increase of light (snang-ba mched-pa. Sanskrit ālokavṛddhi), pursuit of the real truth (de-kho-na'i don-gyi phyogs-gcig-la rjes-su zhugs-pa, Sanskrit tattvārthadeśānupraveśa), and uninterrupted contemplation (bar-chad med-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin. Sanskrit ānantaryasamādhī).

[12]:

On the ten Bodhisattva levels, Including the first (rab-tu dga'-ba) and the tenth (chos-kyi sprin-pa) see the quotation from Sūtrālaṃkāra. below, pp. 965-966; also Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Buddhist Literature, pp. 270-292.

[13]:

On the three kinds of mantra (vidyā, dhāraṇī, and yoga) which are here contrasted with causal doctrines, see above, pp. 123, 178, note 226; and below, p. 939. “Yoga” is normally rendered in this classification as “secret mantra” (gsang-sngags, Sanskrit guhyamantra).

[14]:

This text is generally attributed to Vimalamitra. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt.

2, p. 110. The present passage concerns six modes of Akaniṣṭha, viz. the true Akaniṣṭha (don-gyi 'og-min), the conventional Akaniṣṭha (rtags-kyi 'og-min), the aware Akaniṣṭha (rig-pa'i 'og-min), the secret Akaniṣṭha (gsang-ba'i 'og-min), the conceptual Akaniṣṭha (rtog-pa'i 'og-min), and the mundane Akaniṣṭha ('jig-rten gnas-kyi 'og-min).

[15]:

The two purities (dag-pa gnyis) associated with the dharmakāya or vajrakāya are the absence of the two kinds of suddenly arisen obscuration, i.e., kleśāvaraṇa and jñeyāvaraṇa, on which see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 60b.

[16]:

Tibetan ji-lta-ba-dang ji-snyed-pa mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 61aff., where the former is identified with dharmadhātujñāna and samatājñāna, and the latter with ādarśajñāna, pratyavekṣanajñāna, and kṛtyupasthānajñāna.

[17]:

N.L.

[18]:

Tibetan zhing-rnams bye-ba bsam mi-khyab. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, pt. 2, p. 43b: zhing-rnams bkod-pa bsam mi-khyab.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.3]

... In the abode of Akaniṣṭha, without extremes or centre, on the radiant wheel of pristine cognitions that is the limitless ground, there is his celestial palace, blazing forth with Jewels of pristine cognition, completely uninterrupted throughout the ten directions of space, fashioned as a square because it is vast in measureless enlightened attributes, and adorned with projecting bays of precious gems which are the superior pristine cognition. Its spire is the pristine cognition central to all, in which all maṇḍalas of the buddhas of the ten directions and four times without exception are not distinct from one another and are of a single essence. This inconceivable pristine cognition is extraordinary in its different details of shape, colour and so forth, which form the precious gems of pristine cognition. The palace is superior and immeasurable in extent, [3] ...

[Tibetan]

'og-min-gyi gnas-mtha'-dang dbus-med-pa-na / gzhi tshad-med-pa'i ye-

shes-kyi 'khor-lo gsal-ba-la / ye-shes rin-po-che 'bar-ba'i gzhal-yas-khang / rgya-phyogs-bcur yongs-su ma-chad-pa/ yon-tan dpag-tu med-pa rgyas-pa'i phyir gru-bzhir gyur-pa/ lhag-pa'i ye-shes rin-po-che'i glo-'bur-gyis mdzes-pa / rtse-mo phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i sangs-rgyas-kyi dkyil-'khor ma-lus-pa thams-cad / so-so ma-yin ngo-bo-nyid gcig-pa'i ye-shes kun-tu 'khyil-pa / ye-shes bsam-gyis mi-khyab pa / ye-shes rin-po-che'i dbyibs-dang kha-dog la-sogs-pa rnam-pa tha-dad-pa'i bye-brag-dang khyad-par-du gyur-pa / 'pags-pa / tshad dpag-tu med-pa / [3]

Commentary:

The abode of Akaniṣṭha ('og-min-gyi gnas) where the buddha-body of perfect rapture resides is inconceivable as space, without (med-pa) being limited by extremes or centre (mtha'-dang dbus), because there is no other (field) higher than this buddha-field of the Bounteous Array, supreme among all appearances. It is without the ten directions including apex or zenith and base or nadir. In (na) that limitless (tshad-med-pa) self-manifesting location the ground (gzhi) is not a spatial dimension to which one can objectively refer. It is naturally radiant (gsal-ba) as a wheel ('khor-lo). distinct with four spokes and axle, of five colours which symbolise that the five conflicting emotions are cut off by the unimpeded energy of pristine cognitions (ye-shes-kyi) beginning with the mirrorlike one. These are respectively blue, white, yellow. red and green in nature. Thereupon (la)...

ii. The second concerning the celestial palace (comments on Ch. 1, 3): There is the celestial palace (gzhal-yas-khang) which is great because its essence, attributes, dimensions and so forth cannot be intellectually appraised, blazing forth with ('bar-ba'i) the infinite light and sun-like brilliance of jewels (rin-po-che) in which all that is desired is spontaneously present because it is materialised from the glow of the five pristine cognitions (ye-shes). The dimensions of this palace are conclusively unchanging throughout the ten directions of space (rgya-phyogs-bcur), and so equal to space, completely uninterrupted (yongs-su ma-chad-pa), because the Buddha-body, speech and mind, the inexhaustible wheels of adornment, are inconceivable.

In shape, it is fashioned as a square (gru-bzhir gyur-pa) because it is (phyir) utterly vast (rgyas-pa-'i) in measureless enlightened attributes (yon-tan dpag-tu med-pa) such as the eighteen distinct properties of the buddhas, the consummation of the material elements, and subjugation through charisma.

Now the eighteen distinct properties of the Buddhas (aṣṭaśādenikadharma) are that the Buddha-body, speech and mind are without bewilderment, noise, forgetfulness, unbalanced mind, different cognitions, and equanimity which does not make distinctions—six; that they do not degenerate in their devotion, perseverance, recollection, contemplation, discriminative awareness or liberation—six; that the activities of their body, speech and mind precede pristine cognition and pursue pristine cognition—three; and that they enter into the perception of pristine cognition which is unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to past, present and future—three; making eighteen in all.[1]

Accordingly the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020) says:

Obeisance to you, the Guru
Of conduct and realisation.
Of pristine cognition and enlightened activity.
And of all pious attendants and self-centred Buddhas.

The ten consummations of the material elements (zad-par bcu) are those of earth, water, fire, air, blueness, yellowness, redness, whiteness, space, and consciousness. These ten attributes, which are impervious to water and so forth, are perfect in their ability because independence is obtained with respect to the inner sensory bases and activity fields.[2]

The eight kinds of subjugation by charisma (zil-gnon brgyad) comprise the two charismatic subjugations of all external form, sentient and non-sentient, which occur because inner forms are perceived; the two charismatic subjugations of external forms, sentient and non-sentient, which occur because their inner formlessness is perceived; and the (four) diffusions of lightrays which are the charismatic subjugation of all external colours—blue, yellow, red and white—which occur because their inner beauty is appreciated: making eight in all. The (perception of) inner form, formlessness, and the appreciation of beauty correspond respectively to the three approaches to liberation, beginning with emptiness.[3]

The celestial palace on its four sides is adorned with (gyis mdzes-pa) quadrangular projecting bays of precious gems (rin-po-che'i glo-bur), formed of crystal, gold, ruby and emerald, which are to symbolise the real nature or superior pristine cognition (lhag-pa'i ye-shes), so called because the four conclusive kinds of pristine cognition beginning with the mirror-like one are the doctrines of the buddhas alone and are not found elsewhere.[4]

Now the mirror-like pristine cognition pacifies the signs of the dynamic subject-object dichotomy, and is the basis from which the other three pristine cognitions arise.

The same text (Ornament of Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle, 9.68-73) says:

The mirror-like pristine cognition is unmoving.
The three pristine cognitions which depend on it
Are exclusively those of sameness.
Particular discernment and of accomplishment.

Sameness is that which does not abide in the extremes of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa:

That which abides dynamically and at peace
Is held to be the pristine cognition of sameness.

Particular discernment knows all objects of knowledge distinctly:

The pristine cognition of particular discernment
Ever unimpeded with regard to all that is knowable.
Is solely like a treasure store
Of the contemplations and the dhāraṇīs.

The pristine cognition of accomplishment enters into enlightened activity which corresponds to the fortune of those who require training:

The pristine cognition of accomplishment
Is diversified in all realms.
Through measureless unthinkable emanations
It acts on behalf of all sentient beings.

Such pristine cognitions are Indeed revealed in the maṇḍala as a symbol of the single essence. in order to Illustrate that there are five pristine cognitions which derive from each of the five basic pristine cognitions, the term “quadrangular projecting bay” also (implicitly) indicates the five-layered walls (of the palace) which naturally express the five pristine cognitions, and which from the Inside respectively combine the colours blue, green, red, yellow, and white.

The spire (rtse-mo) of the celestial palace, bulbous as a vase, illustrates the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. It is a symbol of the great pristine cognition (ye-shes) central to all (kun-tu 'khyil-pa) throughout the four times, in which, as previously explained, all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor thams-cad) of the indestructible body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of (kyi) all the buddhas of the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i sangs-rgyas) without exception (ma-lus-pa) are not distinguished from one another (so-so ma-yin) in their natural expression, and are of a single essence (ngo-bo-nyid gcig-pa'i).

Now this celestial palace is also revealed to be not one finite thing, but immeasurable. It possesses this Inconceivable pristine cognition (ye-shes bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa) because each (of the five) pristine cognitions is fivefold, and within these twenty-five a further fivefold subdivision is also distinguished. To symbolise this, the colour of the celestial palace also radiates distinctly the colours of all the countless celestial palaces of its four directions and central area, which derive from the basic celestial palace, conforming respectively in shape and colour, which form the precious gems of pristine cognition (ye-shes rin-po-che'i dbyibs-dang kha-dog). Both the shapes of these (palaces)—square in the centre, crescent in the east, and so forth (la-sogs-pa), and their colours—white, yellow and so forth (la-sogs-pa) are not blurred in their different details rnam-pa tha-dad-pa'i bye-brag), but extraordinary (khyad-par-du gyur-pa) in an inconceivable array.[5]

The palace la superior ('phags-pa)[6] in particular to those attributes which appear to pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and Bodhisattvas; and it is immeasurable in (dpag-tu med-pa) the extent (tshad) of its field, shapes, colours and so forth.

iii. The third, concerning the excellent array, comprises both the

excellent array of the ornaments (of the celestial palace) and the excellent array of its thrones.

[The former (comments on Ch. 1.4)]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Mahāvyutpatti nos. 135-153. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 60b, and Ibid., glossary of enumerations.

[2]:

On these consummations of the elements, which are Indicative of accomplishment in the rdzogs-pa chen-po. see below, Ch. 5. pp. 608-609, 619-621; Ch. 13, 1008-1009. For a biographical account of the effect of such practices, see the life of rBa-sgom in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 193-195.

[3]:

Compare this enumeration of zil-gnon brgyad with that of rnam-par thar-pa brgyad, below, p. 381. In terms of the realisation of rdzogs-chen. inner form (nang-gzugs) corresponds to emptiness (śūnyatā), formlessness (gzugs-med) corresponds to signlessness (animitta), and the appreciation of beauty (sdug-par mos-pa) to aspirationlessness (apraṇihita). On these three “approaches to liberation” see below, pp. 378-380, and in the context of the causal vehicles, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, passim.

[4]:

For an illustration of the vimāna according to the Māyājāla. see opposite p. 374. In this symbolism of the four projecting bays, the central dharmadhātujñāna is not included since it itself is represented by the spire. See p. 376.

[5]:

The five shapes are square, round, triangular, crescentshaped, and bindu-shaped. The five colours are white, blue, yellow, red and green.

[6]:

For an alternative readings, see above, p. 263, note 6.

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... [The palace is superior and immeasurable in extent,] Its garlands which are diverse gemstones of pristine cognition, its silken hangings, the ornaments of its frieze, and diverse forms, diverse sounds, diverse scents, diverse savours, and diverse objects of contact which intermingle in the ten directions are naturally present. Bedecked in inconceivable ornaments which radiate without obscuration, it has embrasured gates, entered through the fourfold approach to liberation, and it has tiered pediments representing the eight kinds of liberation. These are indeed contained within (the celestial palace), without outer and inner (distinctions) in all respects. Therein, [4] ...

[Tibetan]

ye-shes rin-po-che sna-tshogs-kyi phreng-ba-dang / chun-'phyang-dang / shar-bu'i rgyan-dang / gzugs sna-tshogs-dang / sgra sna-tshogs-dang / dri sna-tshogs-dang / ro sna-tshogs-dang / reg-bya sna-tshogs-kyi phyogs-bcur 'khrigs-par rang-byung-la mi-sgrib-par gsal-ba'i rgyan bsam-gyis mi-khyab-par klubs-pa / rnam-par thar-pa bzhi'i sgo-nas 'jug-pa'i sgo-khyud-can / rnam-par thar-pa brgyad-kyi rta-babs-dang ldan-pa / phyi-dang nang med-pa/ kun-tu yang nang-du gyur-pa-na / [4]

Commentary:

Above the five-layered walls of natural expression which appear in the forms and colours of diverse gemstones (rin-po-che sna-tshogs-kyi) materialised from the essence, pristine cognition (ye-shes), there is the cornice (pha-gu), and above that are the beams of the roof-parapet (khabad) from which the battlements are supported. Hanging therefrom are garlands (phreng-ba) and at intervals between them are silken hangings (chun-'phyang) including wreaths in the shape of sun and moon, silk fringes and tassled yak-tail pendants made of jewels. The spire is also adorned with corbelled brackets (pu-shu), the ornaments of its frieze (shar-bu'i rgyan) with a lattice work of precious gems. Endowed with ornaments which radiate without obscuration it shines brightly and is pleasant.

Now, the cornice symbolises the unchanging pristine cognition. The lattices symbolise that the benefit of living beings emerges because the three buddha-bodies are without conjunction or disjunction. The battlements symbolise that living beings are protected by compassion, and the spire symbolises that which is peerless because it is highest of all.[1]

Moreover, upon plinths (for the offerins soddesses) of the desired attributes there emanate throughout the ten directions of the celestial palace clouds of the five groups of five soddesses endowed with desired attributes.[2] And the offerings which they make to the deities within it are the diverse forms (gzugs sna-tshogs), diverse sounds (sgra sna-tshogs), diverse scents (dri sna-tshogs), diverse savours (ro sna-tshogs) and diverse objects of contact (reg-bya sna-tshogs) which intermingle ('khrigs-par) with the cloud-mass in the ten directions (phyogs-bcur). Spontaneously and naturally present (rang-byung). they symbolise that all desired attributes arise as ornaments of the display. There are some who affirm that (the

celestial palace) is neutral, neither pleasant nor unpleasant. However that is incorrect because in this situation the buddhas' own perception is without impurity.

The celestial palace and all its outer and inner ornaments, inasmuch as they are not coarse but clear, are luxuriously bedecked (klubs) and adorned with a beauteous array, inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa) in details. It is endowed with ornaments (rgyan) which radiate (gsal-ba'i), penetrating outwards and Inwards to the core, without obscuring (mi-bsgribs-par) one another. This illustrates that the nature of mind is primordial inner radiance and Immeasurable in enlightened attributes.

It has embrasured gates (sgo khyud-can) adorned with a triple entrance in each of its four directions in order to illustrate that this spontaneous celestial palace of Samantabhadra is entered ('jug-pa) through (nas) the fourfold approach to liberation (rnam-par thar-pa bzhi'i sgo) from obscurations which apprehend substances and signs. These are namely emptiness, signlessness, aspirationlessness, and actual non-compoundedness.

Now, emptiness is the primordial essenceless nature of all things. Signlessness is the absence of Independent existence in anything from the very moment at which it appears. Aspirationlessness is the absence of proof, refutation, acceptance and rejection. And actual non-compoundedness is the effortless mind-as-such which is present once the nature of these has been realised. This uncompoundedness when classified is twofold. It comprises both primordial inner radiance and the four immeasurables which are spontaneously present through natural momentum derived from its disposition.

The former is the mind-as-such, primordially pure and inwardly radiant, on which it says in the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8):

This mind is not the mind. The natural expression of mind is inner radiance.

The Tathāgata, absorbed in meditation in the grove of the (Bodhi) Tree, where he attained liberation, also said of it:[3]

I have found a nectar-like doctrine—
Profound, calm, simple, radiant and uncompounded.
If I teach it no-one will understand.
I will remain right here in the forest, in silence.

And in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):

In it there is nothing to be clarified.
Nor is there anything at all to be established.
Correctly regard the genuine reality.
If one perceives correctly, one will be liberated.

The latter (sort of uncompoundedness, i.e. the four immeasurables) are,

namely, loving kindness which desires that sentient beings without happiness might encounter happiness, compassion which desires that those who are tormented by suffering might be separated therefrom, sympathetic Joy which desires that those in possession of happiness might not be separated therefrom, and equanimity which desires that those who have attachment and hatred might be separated from all attachments and hatred for those far and near, and then abide in even-mindedness.

Because these four immeasurables have emerged from the disposition of non-referential and signless spirituality, it says in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Endowed with love for sentient beings.
Intending them to encounter (happiness)
And be separated (from suffering),
Intending them not to be separated (from happiness).
Obeisance to you, intent on spiritual and temporal well-being.

It is explained that the four gates (of the celestial palace) symbolise the four immeasurables, and that each gate is embrasured and adorned with three successive entrances, in order to symbolise the (first) three approaches to liberation.

The eight kinds of liberation (rnam-par thar-pa brgyad) are namely: the liberation which regards outer forms to be a magical display of appearance and emptiness because the apparitions of (ones own) inner form are unimpeded, and which thus regards the mistaken apprehension of the true existence of appearances as a dichotomy of subjective and objective forms: the liberation which regards outer forms without reference to (ones own) inner form, and which thus regards the release from the apprehension of the true existence of outer and inner phenomena not as a subjective form but as an objective form; the liberation which regards all things as emptiness of a single savour, and which thus is a pleasant release from all subjective grasping: the liberation which perceives the space-like significance of mind-as-such, and which thus is the activity field of infinite space: the liberation which realises all things to be a display of mind and pristine cognition, and which thus is the activity field of infinite consciousness; the liberation which is without the subject-object dichotomy in all respects, and which thus is the activity field of nothing-at-all; the liberation which pacifies the entire range of conceptual elaboration and signs, and which thus is the activity field of neither perception nor non-perception: and the liberation which never has objective reference or subjective apprehension with respect to all things of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and so forth, and which thus is cessation.[4]

To represent the perfect enlightened attributes of these (eight kinds of liberation), outside each of the four gates there are four pillars, two on each side, which support the gate, and above them four indestructible beams, on which there is a tiered pediment (rta-babs dang-ldan-pa) with four terraced steps (bang-rim) of eight units (snam-phran).[5] Beneath a parasol of precious gems, (the pediment) is adorned with a doctrinal wheel, two deer who turn it by their motion, embroidered hangings, victory banner, divine robes, silk fringes, and sounds which emerge from

the flapping of twenty-four flags (ba-dan) attached to each of the four corner-terraces (kha-khyer/vedi), from golden bells and garlands of tinklets.

Furthermore it says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

It (the pediment) is equipped in (ascending) order
With base (zhabs), lotus (ma-chags).
Tassles (zar-tshags), assorted hangings (sna-'phyang).
Silken hangings (chun-'phyang), garlands ('phreng-ba).
And a garuḍa with diverse heads (sna-tshogs khyung-mgo).

The (Sanskrit) word toraṇa conveys the meanings of an aerial victory banner, a gatekeeper, a platform on which a rider descends from a horse, and a staircase. However, in this context, it is held above all to refer to the tiered pediment which adorns the air (above the celestial palace), with its four terraced steps, (each) with four sub-units, making eight in all. There are some who hold it to symbolise the entrance into Atiyoga from the eight lower vehicles, and there are some who claim it is the entrance effected through meditation into the eight kinds of liberation. These interpretations, however, are irrelevant here because (the symbolism) must apply to the enlightened attributes of the Buddha-level alone.[6]

In order to illustrate that the pristine cognition of the buddha-body of reality free from conceptual elaborations is without outer and inner distinctions (phyi-nang) and that all these enlightened attributes of the buddha-level are not excluded but indeed contained within (nang-du gyur-pa) it in all respects (kun-tu yang). this celestial palace, in whose nature the five lights of pristine cognition brilliantly glow, appears from the disposition of the Tathāgata's spirituality. All that appears as the outer (phyi) Buddha-field and all that appears as the inner (nang) central deity and retinue is therefore gathered at all times and in all (kun-tu) respects in the essential abiding nature. Thus they are Indeed (yang) present, without straying from the disposition of Samantabhadra, the buddha-body of reality, or without (med-par) existing as different phenomena which are extraneous to his own nature. Therefore it is said that these are contained within (nang-du gyur-pa) (the celestial palace) primordially, in a state free from conceptual elaborations. Therein (na)...

[The latter, concerning the excellent array of thrones, (comments on Ch. 1.5):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For an illustration of these architectural features of the vimāna. see p. 373b, and the plan in fig. 4, immediately above, which is derived from the klong-chen snying-thig-gi gtor-ma'i dpe'u ris.

[2]:

Tibetan 'dod-yon-gyi snam-bu. The kāmagaṇas are of course the offerings of the five sense-objects, symbolised by the Apsaras (mchod-pa'i lha-mo).

[3]:

Lalitavistara. xxv. 1.

[4]:

Interpreted according to the oral teaching of Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse'i Rin-po-che. Cf. zil-gnon brgyad. above, p. 374. By the eight kinds of liberation the form and formless realms are liberated. On the formless activity-fields, see NSTB, Book 1, chart.

[5]:

Each step of the pediment comprises one vertical and one horizontal unit. On the distinction between the causal and resultant pediments (rgyudang 'bras-bu'i rta-babs). see Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch. 1, p. 76.

[6]:

The present context of the self-manifesting Ghanavyūha realm is the resultant Akaniṣṭha and not one in which the structures of the path apply.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.5]

... [Therein,] on a lion throne of fearlessness, an elephant throne of power, a horse throne of miraculous abilities, a peacock throne of power, and a bird throne of unimpeded nature, on seats of precious gems endowed with solar and lunar disks of natural inner radiance, and with untainted lotuses, [5] ...

[Tibetan]

mi-'jigs-pa seng-ge'i khri-dang / stobs glang-po-che'i khri-dang /
rdzu-'phrul rta-yi khri-dang / dbang rma-bya'i khri-dang / thogs-pa med-pa
nam-mkha' lding-gi khri-dang / rang-bzhin-gyis 'od-gsal-ba nyi-zla'i
dkyil-'khor-dang / gos-pa med-pa padma rin-po-che'i gdan-la / [5]

Commentary:

[Concerning the excellent array of thrones]

In order to illustrate that (Samantabhadra) is unawed by the lower

vehicles and possesses the four fearlessnesses (mi-'jig-pa), (the celestial palace) has a lion throne (seng-ge'i khri) in the centre. The four fearlessnesses are namely the commitment to realisation which is expressed in the words, "I, the Buddha"; the commitment to renunciation which is expressed in the words, "...have renounced all obscurations"; the commitment to cessation which is expressed in the words, "...have cut off the three poisons at will until obtaining liberation"; and the commitment to the path which is expressed in the words, "....have become disillusioned with saṃsāra by meditating on the profound path." They are so called because they abide indisputedly in the truth.[1]

Accordingly, the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020) says:

Obeisance to you who reveals pristine cognition,
Renunciation, disillusionment and cessation
For the sake of self and others.
Unbowed by others who are eternalistic extremists.

To symbolise that meanings are contained here which are excluded in the lower vehicles, and that (Samantabhadra) possesses ten kinds of power (stobs) with respect to the vehicle, the palace has an elephant throne (glang-po-che'i khri) in the east. The ten powers are the ten kinds of knowledge, namely: knowledge of determinate and indeterminate places; knowledge of the maturation of the deeds of living beings; knowledge of concentration combined with contemplation and liberation; knowledge of the diverse volitions of those to be trained; knowledge of their diverse sensory bases; knowledge of those who have supreme acumen and those who do not; knowledge of the path on which the five classes of living beings progress to the three kinds of liberation: knowledge of the recollection of the past abodes where oneself and others have been born; knowledge of the transference of consciousness at the death of sentient beings and their consequent rebirth: and knowledge of the cessation of corruption. They are so called because the obscurations covering these ten kinds of knowledge. i.e. their ten respective incompatible conditions, are subdued.[2]

Accordingly the same text says:

Obeisance to you, subduer of those demons
Who thoroughly deceive sentient beings
In matters of skillful means, refuge, purity.
And disillusionment according to the greater vehicle.

To symbolise that all who require training are swiftly liberated and that (Samantabhadra) possesses the four supports for miraculous abilities (rdzu-'phrul), the palace has an "all-knowing" horse throne (rta-yi khri) in the south.[3] The four supports (for miraculous ability) are those of aspiration, perseverance, meditation and scrutiny, which are emanated according to the minds of living beings and through which acts of benefit are then performed.[4]

On this subject the Short Commentary (T. 3793) says:

Through the four supports (for miraculous abilities)
Namely those which combine training in the contemplations
Of aspiration, perseverance, meditation and scrutiny...

To symbolise that (Samantabhadra) holds sway over all appearances and possesses the ten kinds of power (dbang), the palace has a peacock throne (rma-bya'i khri) of precious gems in the west. The ten powers are namely: power over the lifespan because there is no death; power over the mind which knows the minds of living beings; power over necessities because the celestial treasury is possessed; power over deeds because the negative deeds of others are transformed into positive ones; power over birth because emanations spontaneously emerge in accordance with the training; power over aspiration because one's intentions are fulfilled during oceans of past and future aeons; power over devotion because acts of benefit are performed in accordance with the devotion of those to be trained; power over miraculous abilities because all world-systems are penetrated at will in a mustard seed, revealing for example that it is unclear whether the worldsystems become smaller or the mustard seed larger; power over pristine cognition because acts of benefit are performed by those who have mastered the five great pristine cognitions, including the mirror-like one; and power over doctrine because all things are actually known, qualitatively and quantitatively, without exception.[5]

The same text says:

Through power over necessities, birth, and life-span.
And over pristine cognition, doctrine, mind, and deeds,
Miraculous ability, aspiration, and devotion,[6]
The mighty lord of all three realms is victorious.

To symbolise that living beings are trained by diverse enlightened activities and that acts of benefit are performed through three pristine cognitions of unimpeded nature (thogs-pa med-pa) and four kinds of genuine particular awareness. the palace has a shang-shang or bird throne (nam-mkha' lding-gi khri)[7] in the north. The three pristine cognitions of unimpeded nature are the three fixed gazes of pristine cognition (ye-shes-kyi gzigs-pa 'jugs-pa gsum) which are unattached and unimpeded with reference to past, future and present time. The four awarenesses are the four kinds of genuine particular awareness, namely, awareness of the doctrine which occurs when the essence of all things with all their causes and results is known, awareness of meaning (don) which occurs when the meaning of that (essence) is revealed through many modes of expression, awareness of language (skad) which occurs when knowledge is revealed of the languages of sentient beings including the gods, and awareness of brilliance (or courage) which occurs because saṃsāra is not feared when the doctrine is explained.[8]

The Ornament of the Sūtras the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020) says:

Obeisance to you who excellently reveals
An intelligence that is never impeded.
And explains the supporting (doctrine).

The supported meaning, the Buddha-speech.
And the (brilliant) knowledge.

Furthermore there is a definite description of these seats in the Tantra of Precious Empowerment (rin-po-che dbang-gi rgyud):

The Buddha-body is fearless, thoroughly subduing the four demons.
As a sign of this success, (the Buddha) sits on a lion throne.
The buddha-mind has ten powers, training the ten non-virtues.
As a sign of this success, (the buddha) sits on an elephant throne.
The buddha-attributes are the four supports for miraculous ability.
Through which one progresses without attachment.
As a sign of this success, (the buddha) sits on the throne of a supreme horse.

The buddha-speech is the ten powers, the way of the perfect conqueror.
As a sign of this success, (the buddha) sits on a peacock throne.
The buddha-activity is the four kinds of enlightened activity
Through which one is liberated from the four modes of birth.
As a sign of this success, (the buddha) sits on a bird throne.

To symbolise that mind-as-such, the Buddha-body of reality, is of natural inner radiance (rang-bzhin gyi 'od-gsal-ba), and that skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality, these (thrones) are endowed with solar and lunar disks (nyi-zla'i dkyil-khor); and (dang) to symbolise that they are untainted (gos-pa med-pa) by all defective flaws they are endowed with multi-coloured lotuses (padma). Thus. (the Buddhas) sit on seats (gdan-la) formed of precious gems (rin-po-che'i), in which all these desired qualities are found. Now, upon these five thrones are the seats of the central deities (i.e. the five conquerors), while their retinues each have their own seats in their respective (peripheral) locations, endowed with lotuses, and solar and lunar disks.

[The Excellent Teacher (60.4-87.4):]

Second (see p. 357). there is the detailed exegesis of the excellent teacher. It comprises both an overview and an interlinear commentary. The former (60.4-72.5) has three parts, namely. the classification of the enlightened family, the recognition of the enlightened family to which this text belongs, and a refutation of the misconceptions of others.

i. As to the first (the classification of the enlightened family): In general there are five enlightened families when classified according to the result or actual awakening in reality. These are the enlightened family of the Tathāgata, the enlightened family of indestructible reality, the enlightened family of precious gems, the enlightened family of the lotus, and the enlightened family of activity. Each of these is further subdivided into five (minor) enlightened families, namely those of buddha-body. speech. mind. attributes and activities: making twenty-five in all. Similarly when the five enlightened families are further subdivided according to buddha-body, speech, and mind, they number hundreds, thousands, millions or even an innumerable quantity of enlightened families.[9]

It says in the Tantra of (Precious) Empowerment (dbang-gi rgyud):

The enlightened family which has five aspects
Is numbered thorough classification
In hundreds, thousands, millions or countless enumerations.
Like space it is unthinkable.

When an enlightened family is distinctly classified in this way, the central deity of any maṇḍala belongs to the enlightened family of Buddha-mind, which is subsumed within that particular enlightened family.

It says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

In the maṇḍalas of the enlightened family
The lord of the enlightened family or Buddha-mind
Is the central deity of that enlightened family.

Furthermore, in the enlightened family of the tathāgata, the Buddha-mind is dark blue Vairocana, the Buddha-body is white Vajrasattva, the Buddha-speech is red Amitābha, the enlightened attributes are yellow Ratnasambhava, and the enlightened activities are green Amoghasiddhi. in the enlightened family of indestructible reality, the Buddha-mind is dark blue Akṣobhya, the buddha-body is white Vairocana, and the others have the colours of their respective (deities as above). in the enlightened family of the lotus, the Buddha-mind of Buddha-speech is dark blue Amitābha, the Buddha-body of Buddha-speech is white Vairocana, while the enlightened attributes and activities of buddha-speech are respectively yellow (Ratnasambhava) and green (Amoghasiddhi). in the enlightened family of precious gems, the buddha-mind of precious gems is dark blue Ratnasambhava, the enlightened attributes are yellow Akṣobhya, while the other three have the colours of their respective (deities as above). in the enlightened family of activity, the buddha-mind of activity is dark blue Amoghasiddhi, the enlightened activity is green Akṣobhya, and the others have the colours of their respective (deities as above). This classification is the intention of the uncommon tantras.[10]

Simultaneously, the pristine cognition of the enlightened family of buddha-mind, which is the mirror-like pristine cognition, is that of the central deity, while the other four (pristine cognitions) are exemplified by the other four (deities). in the case of the enlightened family of the tathāgata, the mirror-like pristine cognition belongs to Vairocana who is the buddha-mind. The pristine cognition of reality's expanse belongs to Akṣobhya who is the buddha-body of that buddha-mind. The pristine cognition of sameness belongs to Ratnasambhava who is the enlightened attributes, the pristine cognition of particular discernment belongs to Amitābha who is the buddha-speech, and the pristine cognition of accomplishment belongs to Amoghasiddhi who is the enlightened activity. However, in the case of the enlightened family of indestructible reality, the mirror-like pristine cognition belongs to Akṣobhya who is the buddha-mind, and the pristine cognition of reality's expanse to Vairocana who is the buddha-body. Such has been taught (in the uncommon Tantras).[11]

Even in the circumstances of impure saṃsāra buddha-hood is held to be primordially attained in the nature of the five pristine cognitions, as

stated in the following passages:

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality
Are known as the five perfect buddhas (Ch. 2. 2).

And:

Sentient beings are themselves buddhas.

And:

The collected thoughts of living beings are the enlightened mind.[12]

On one occasion it is said in the profound Sūtra of the Arrayed Bouquet (Gaṇḍavvūhasūtra). T. 44):

Those who abide well in natural sameness
With respect to self and Buddhas
And are dynamic and non-acquisitive.
Become the Sugatas.
With purity of form and feeling.
Of perception, consciousness and attention.
The countless Tathāgatas
Become the supreme sages.[13]

In the Sūtra of Vimalakīrti (T. 176) it also says:

That which beholds mundane aggregates is the seed of the tathāgata.

And:

Just as a lotus is not produced from dry ground, but is produced from marshland, so the unsurpassed enlightened mind is not produced among those who have actualised the uncompounded state (of nirvāṇa), but the unsurpassed enlightened mind is produced when one has developed the view of mundane aggregates to the extent of Mt. Sumeru. Therefore one who has conflicting emotions has the seed of the tathāgata.

And in the chapter on commitments which are not to be guarded[14] from the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

The delusion which is thus gathered in non-conceptualisation
Is characteristically devoid of acceptance or rejection,
And belongs to the buddha-body, the enlightened family of the tathāgata.

The hatred through which venomous beings are instructed.
Without straying from reality's expanse.
Characteristically belongs to the enlightened family of indestructible reality.

The pride which arduously imposes sameness on phenomena
Characteristically belongs to the enlightened family of precious gems.
The desire which possesses all things
Characteristically belongs to the enlightened family of the lotus.

The envy which acts on behalf of living beings
Because those who misunderstand the sameness of things
Have virtuous and evil karma
Characteristically belongs to the enlightened family of activity.

And in the Guhyasamājatantra (T. 442-3):

The delusory nature of form that is revealed
Is the essence of bondage for the foolish:
The desirous sensation of feelings
That is revealed is the essence of pride:
The identity of the desire for perception
Characterises attachment to objects;
Envy with respect to habitual tendencies
Becomes one-pointed self-esteem;
Consciousness revealed as hatred
Is well known in causal and resultant (teachings).[15]
These belong to the enlightened families of the five sugatas.

And for example:

There is neither buddha nor sentient being
Who have emerged from within this precious mind.

On the other hand, how, you may ask, do the sensory bases of living beings appear to be Impure and diverse? Although they are primordially pure and Immaculate, they have emerged through the power which diversely establishes the variety of deeds, happiness and sorrow in the ground-of-all. This is caused by the flux of thought, engendered by suddenly arisen imagination.[16]

The ground-of-all is Indeed universal, and is the support of everything, as is said in the Sūtra of the Descent to Lañkā (T. 107):

The ground-of-all is the support of everything.
It is the ground of rebirth
And likewise of purification.

Moreover, when the ground-of-all appears as Impure saṃsāra. it is the activating support. Inseparably present. But as the real nature of pure phenomena it is named the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. On that real nature all pristine cognition is supported; whereas on the ground-of-all that manifests as saṃsāra the consciousness of the ground-of-all, the mind of conflicting emotions, the consciousness of the Intellect and the consciousness of the five senses are supported.

According to some sūtras and tantras, these (aggregates of consciousness) are held to be purified into the five pristine cognitions through purification and transmutation. The ground-of-all is transmuted into the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. Similarly, the consciousness of the ground-of-all is transmuted into the mirror-like pristine cognition, the intellect of conflicting emotions into the pristine cognition of particular discernment, the consciousness of the intellect into the pristine cognition

of sameness, and the consciousness of the five senses into the pristine cognition of accomplishment.

Similarly, form is transmuted into Vairocana, feeling into Ratnasambhava, perception into Amitābha, habitual tendency into Amoghasiddhi, and consciousness into Akṣobhya; while earth is transmuted into Buddhālokanā, water into Māmakī, fire into Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, air into Samayatārā, and space into Dhātviśvarī. The sense-organs and their objects too are transmuted (respectively) into the essence of the male and female spiritual warriors (i.e. bodhisattvas), while the three media (of body, speech and mind) with their apprehension are known to be transmuted into the gatekeepers.

However, in this text (the Secret Nucleus). the process is not held to resemble the sort of transmutation which occurs when a purificatory act alters the ground of purification, as when a blanket is transformed by dyes. This is because rejection & acceptance, purification & transformation are transcended. It is held on the other hand that (consciousness and so forth) are primordially present as pristine cognition, and that by knowing this to be so, the Imaginary thoughts of saṃsāra are liberated in pristine cognition. in the manner of ice melting into water, saṃsāra is liberated in nirvāṇa.

By experiencing the profound essential nature, which is pure but ostensibly impure because it has been dispelled by present stains of imagination, the imaginary thoughts and components are turned into pristine cognition. Then, once the stains have been abandoned, these become pure in the expanse. It is as, for example, when a lump of mercury mixed with gold momentarily resembles either fresh butter or mercury rather than gold, but does appear as gold by coming into contact with fire, at which time the fresh butter colour of the mercury vanishes of itself. Indeed when that lump is Intensely heated in fire it appears like the gold of the Jambhu [Jambu?] River.[17] Similarly, one should know that through the experience of the profound path. there are provisional (results) of the sublime awareness-holders who are liberated from conflicting emotions. and on the buddha-level there are awareness-holders of spontaneous presence.[18]

ii. Secondly (see p. 389). there is the recognition of the enlightened family to which (this text) belongs: There are those of the past who have explained that the maṇḍala in this (text) belongs to the enlightened family of indestructible reality and thence that the central deity is Akṣobhya. However that is not the case (firstly) because the central seat signifying the lord of the enlightened family has (the emblems) of a wheel and a lion, (secondly) because the female consort of the central deity is Indeed Akāśadhātviśvarī, (thirdly) because in the case of the wrathful deities who emanate from the glow of the peaceful deities the central one is Buddha Heruka, and (fourthly) because there is occasion to explain and indicate that this maṇḍala does not confuse the central deity and retinue present in the self-manifesting ground of pristine cognition.[19]

(Those mistaken views of the past) are also refuted by the following passage from the means for attainment and empowerment rituals

belonging to this (Secret Nucleus), which were composed by the great master Padmasambhava:[20]

HŪṂ! The mirror-like pristine cognition is pure
And the transcendent lord Vairocana
Together with the mudrā Dhātvīśvarī
Empowers the son of the enlightened family.

They are also contradicted by the passage from the White Lotus Commentary on the Magical Net Mañjuśrī ('jam-dpal sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i 'grel-pa padma dkar-po), a unique subdivision of the uncommon tantras, which says:

The embodiment of the mirror-like pristine cognition is dark blue Vairocana. The embodiment of the pristine cognition of reality's expanse is white Akṣobhya.

On the other hand, you may ask, surely (the central deity) is Akṣobhya because (this text) is explained to be part of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva (rdo-rje sems-dpa' sgyu-'phrul dra-ba)? Not so! Otherwise one could not avoid defects such as the implicit conclusion that the text entitled the Magical Net of the Goddess (T. 836) should have a goddess as its central deity. However, in the Magical Net of Vajrasattva (Vajrasattva) is explained to be a general term for all the enlightened families, and does not refer to Akṣobhya alone.

In the Yogatantras (rnal-'byor-gyi rgyud) it is also said:[21]

O! Vajrasattva, lord of all enlightened families,
Be the lord of all enlightened families and maṇḍalas.

This follows the same procedure of naming the central deity of any maṇḍala Vajrasattva (i.e. spiritual warrior of indestructible reality).

It is improper to have firm conviction in the sPar-khab Commentary (P. 4718), the Eulogy to the Ground (gzhi-la bstod-pa) and so forth because they are not Tibetan commentaries! You have not even seen the Flash Splendour (T. 830) which says:[22]

In the centre is Vairocana, the central deity.

Therefore in this (Tantra of the Secret Nucleus) the central deity is Vairocana, the deity of buddha-mind, because its maṇḍala belongs to the enlightened family of the buddha-mind of the Tathāgatas' Buddha-mind, while Akṣobhya is identified with the indestructible Buddha-body (in that family).

iii. Thirdly (see p. 389), there is a refutation of the misconceptions of others:

Does this (status of Vairocana as the central deity) not, you may ask, contradict the following statement which is found in other tantras:[23]

Form is itself Vairocana,
Feeling is Ratnasambhava,
Perception is Amitābha,
Habitual tendency is Amoghasiddhi,
And consciousness is Akṣobhya.

Also, is there not a contradiction because the body-colour (of

Vairocana) is explained to be dark blue?

In response (to your first point), gentlemen, the common and uncommon tantrapīṭakas are each valid because they direct the intellect respectively towards lower and higher (vehicles). You have (secondly) confused the expression “king of consciousness” with the term “dark blue”. In this tradition of ours one is introduced to (the view) that there is no difference between Akaniṣṭha, or the expanse of Indestructible reality, and the hundred authentic families (of the peaceful and wrathful deities) who are present as inner radiance in the heart-centre, within a space of five lights.[24]

It says in the Tantra of Intention: the nucleus of Esoteric Instruction (snying-gi dgongs-pa'i rgyud):

Once the dark blue Vairocana, holding the wheel in his hands, has been embraced by the female consort Ākāśadhātviśvarī, the six Buddha-bodies arise simultaneously.[25]

Therefore, the expression “king of consciousness” and the term “dark blue” both refer to the Buddha-mind of Buddha-mind in the enlightened family of the Tathāgata.

Elsewhere it is the intention of the common tantras that Vairocana is explained to be form, the enlightened family of Buddha-body, and Akṣobhya to be the Buddha-mind. This is with reference to the general five enlightened families, and to digressions from the basic maṇḍala, such as the maṇḍala of the Buddha-body of Buddha-body.

In addition, Ākāśadhātviśvarī is space because mind-as-such is naturally pure, and consciousness is Vairocana because it radiates and shines diversely, and also the mirror-like pristine cognition which apprehends reflected Images. Buddhalocanā however is the perceptual range of reality's expanse because, unwavering and without conceptual thought, she is the reality corresponding to delusion; and the solidity of the earth element subsumed in the component of form is explained to be Akṣobhya because it does not change into another nature. This analysis according to the higher tantrapīṭakas surpasses others.[26] Thus one should know the central deity to be Vairocana in a maṇḍala surrounded by clusters (of deities) who form the retinue of his enlightened family.

Now, if you ask where the Teacher, the male & female consort Samantabhadra who masters all spirituality, is located in this maṇḍala, there are some who say that he resides in a consecratory manner in the courtyard (of the maṇḍala). That however is not the case. It is Incorrect because he would implicitly become the retinue, and a central deity who abides on the periphery is not found in any maṇḍala belonging to the common and uncommon (tantras).[27] Rather it is the case that in the situation of the buddha-body of reality, the great naturally present pristine cognition is Itself present, transcending objects of reference, thought and conceptual elaboration, and is called the male and female consort Samantabhadra.

Accordingly the Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-367) says:

The spiritual warrior, actuality of all Buddhas,
Vajrasattva, supreme delight.
When rejoicing in that supreme secret
Is constantly present as the Identity of them all.

And in the Lamp Precious Gems (rin-po-che'i sgron-ma) which was composed by the great master Vimalamitra:

In the maṇḍala of reality's expanse, without abiding.
He is called the male and female consort Samantabhadra.
When therefrom he assumes the body of perfect rapture
He is known as the buddhas of the five enlightened families.
When he performs acts of benefit through emanation
He is Vajrasattva—the countless and inestimable
Holders of indestructible reality.

Thus, the male & female consort Samantabhadra becomes Vairocana, the central deity of the five enlightened families, when selfmanifesting as the maṇḍala of perfect rapture.

There is also said to be a sequence of meditation within the heart-centre (of Vairocana) where (this deity) is experienced by one who delights during meditation in the practices of visualisation.[28]

And in the Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-367) it also says:

Then through skillful means which train living beings
This reality appears as the five enlightened families.
This unique nature of genuine accomplishment
May indeed be encountered as desired.

Emanating from that (reality), in order to train living beings he appears as Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara and so forth, and as the inestimable display of the six sages.

The active male subject and the passive female object who are said (by some) to be arrayed in the courtyard are called the male and female consort Samantabhadra of the ground from which all glows (of divine presence) arise. This glow of pure reality's expanse initially appears, during the bar-do for example, as a duality of appearance and emptiness: and thence it gradually becomes the ground from which the clusters of different peaceful and wrathful deities arise. The words “in the courtyard” actually refer to the heart-centre of the central deity. its “front and rear” indicate the essence of the (deity's) posture, which is one of sexual embrace. More precisely, the central deity of the ground (Samantabhadra) is the central deity in the middle (of the maṇḍala), while the two male & female consorts who are its glow abide in the heart-centre of that (central deity) and are the pristine cognition without duality of appearance and emptiness. This is the mode (of explanation) found in the uncommon tantras, the esoteric Instructions of the gurus, and the great writings of means for attainment.[29]

This maṇḍala even abides at the present moment, the peaceful deities being in the heart-centre,[30] as is said in the following passage from the Tantra of the Coalescence of Sun and Moon (NGB. Vol. 9):

In the celestial (palace) of the precious heart-centre
Are the forty-two maṇḍalas of peaceful deities.
Their buddha-bodies appear without Independent existence.
And their subtle inner radiance is present in the heart.

The fifty-eight wrathful deities are present in the crown-centre, as the same text says:

The fifty-eight blood drinkers who are their glow
Are in the celestial (palace) of the cranium or skull.

This is also stated in the Intermediate Purificatory Rite of the Creation and Perfection Stages according to the Gathering of the Sugatas (bde-gshegs 'dus-pa'i bskyed-rdzogs 'bring-po'i las-byang) of the master (Padmasambhava) which says:

The peaceful deities are present
In their spontaneous maṇḍala.

And:

In the dark brown palace of the skull which blazes forth
The portals are constructed with the mighty king of Māras,
And rivetted with awesome wrathful deities,
The pillars and beams are fashioned of the eight Mahādevas
Who are proud spirits,
It is well filled with the eight great Nāgas
Who are venomous spirits.
Its roof-parapets are made with great Rāhula,
And the lattices with the constellations.[31]

Now, the (Sanskrit word) bhandha means skull (or head), the hair of which is dark brown in colour. The other (terms) refer to the nape of the neck and the centre of the energy channels which comprise two fontanelles (or secret soft spots) and two soft spots on the nape.[32] This concludes the exegesis of the overview (concerning the excellence of the teacher).

The latter (see p. 389) is the interlinear commentary on (the excellence of the teacher. 72.5-874). It includes a common teaching on the posture and symbolic hand-implements of the central deity and an explanation of the different male and female consorts.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 1.6):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents for the four fearlessnesses (caturvaiśāradya) are enumerated in Mahāvyutpatti 130-134. See also NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[2]:

For the ten powers (daśatathāgatabala), see Mahāvyutpatti 119-129; also NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[3]:

On the “all-knowing” horse (cang-shes-pa rta), known as Ājaneyabalaha, see the Pali Valahassa Jātaka; also R.A. Stein, *Recherches Sur l'Épopée et Le Barde au Tibet*. pp. 426, 510-1.

[4]:

Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents for the four supports for miraculous ability (caturṛddhipāda) are given in NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[5]:

On these ten powers (daśavaṣita). see Candragomin, *Commentary on the Secret Tantra at Mañjuśrī*, 75-71-3-2; also NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[6]:

Scribal error: This verse includes chos twice among the daśavaṣita, omitting mos-pa (devotion).

[7]:

The shang-shang (Sanskrit cīvaṃcīvaka), symbolising enlightened activity, has a human torso and a bird-like lower body.

[8]:

Concerning these four kinds of genuine particular awareness (catuḥpratisaṃvid). see NSTB, glossary of enumerations, under “four modes of specific genuine awareness.” In this present context, our text erroneously reads tshig for don, and skad for tshig.

[9]:

The relationship of these families to the outer tantras of Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra and Yogatantra, as well as to Mahāyoga, is discussed in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4.

[10]:

On the rotation of the central deity dependent on specific enlightened

families, see also above, p. 68. It is on this basis that kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, alone among commentators, places Vairocana at the centre. His reasons for so doing are outlined below, pp. 397-401. For a conventional view, see Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dzonzs-rgyan*. Ch. 1, pp. 81-86, where Akṣobhya-Vajrasattva is at the centre.

[11]:

In the present case of the tathāgatakula, the author holds the central deity, Vairocana, to represent the mirror-like pristine cognition (*ādarśajñāna*). See below, p. 420.

[12]:

N.L.

[13]:

In line 2 of this verse our text reads *gang-zhig bdag-dang sangs-rgyas-nams*. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 112b: *gang-zhig bdag-dang sems-can-nams*. Also in line 4 it reads *de-dag bde-bar gshegs-par gsungs*. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. p. 112b: *de-dag bde-bar gshegs-par 'gyur*.

[14]:

Tibetan *bsrung-ba med-pa'i dam-tshig*. On this term, see NSTB, p. 226b. As indicated in the text, it refers to the true or resultant perspective of the five poisons.

[15]:

On the distinctions between causal and resultant vehicles, see NSTB, Book 1, Pts. 3-4. In the former case, hatred is to be purified, while the latter views hatred as primordially pure.

[16]:

Tibetan *glo-bur kun-tu btags-pas rtog-pa'i spags-pas*. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b.

[17]:

Tibetan *'dzam-bu chu-bo'i gser*: A metaphor for excellent gold accessible to a universal monarch.

[18]:

On the provisional awareness-holders of maturation, power over the lifespan and the great seal, as well as the resultant awareness-holders of spontaneous presence, see below, pp. 810-811, 959-974, PP. 1247-1248.

[19]:

Note that authors such as Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, Ch. 1, p. 88, hold Dhātviśvarī to be the consort of Akṣobhya in this context. On the Importance of Vairocana in the form Himamahāsāgara at the centre of the self-manifesting ground, see kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, theg-mchog rin-po-che'i mdzod. pp. 7ff.; also NSTB, Book 2, p. 10ff.

[20]:

N.L.

[21]:

N.L.

[22]:

kLong-chen-pa's arguments are often accompanied by robust, outspoken remarks, such as this one directed against Lilāvajra, the author of the sPar-khab Commentary. See also e.g., below, pp. 578, 649.

[23]:

N.L.

[24]:

On the presence of the peaceful and wrathful maṇḍalas in the body, see below, pp. 403-404, pp. 1022ff.

[25]:

This enumeration of six buddha-bodies considers the abhisambodhikāya to have two aspects—the Buddha-body of sameness (samatākāya) and the Buddha-body of pristine cognition (jñānakāya). See below, Ch. 6, pp. 674-675.

[26]:

A direct reference to the distinction between the Atiyoga interpretation and that of Mahāyoga favoured by the bka'-ma tradition, derived from Lilāvajra's sPar-khab Commentary.

[27]:

As stated in Ch. 4, pp. 579-580, they are considered separately in terms of their mantras to symbolise that the sambhogakāya arises from the dharmakāya. In Ch. 6, pp. 645-649, in the context of the contemplative maṇḍala, they are held also held to be in the courtyard as the basis of the emanational nirmāṇakāya. but note the author's explanation of the phrase “in the courtyard” in this chapter, p. 403.

[28]:

On this meditative practice, see below, p. 646.

[29]:

For a further explanation of gdangs-kyi kun-bzang yab-yum, see Ch. 6, pp. 645-649.

[30]:

On the experiential cultivation of the body-maṇḍalas described in this section, see Ch. 13, pp. 1022ff.

[31]:

See also below, Ch. 15, pp. 1078ff. for a discussion on the wrathful maṇḍala of the crown-centre.

[32]:

Tibetan mtshogs-gsang gnyis-dang ltag-gsang gnyis: As Indicated and Illustrated in Dr. Lobsang Rapgyay, Tibetan Therapeutic Massage. p. 7, the first two comprise the anterior fontanelle and the anterior bilateral fontanelles; while the latter are described as the posterior fontanelle and posterior bilateral fontanelles.

Text 1.6 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.6]

... [Therein,] ... is the Buddha-body without front or rear. in all directions his visage radiates penetratingly, and he is endowed with the major and minor marks. In every inconceivable (world-system) he appears universally as diverse Buddha-body, speech and mind. His two legs of skillful means and discriminative awareness assume the posture of the ascetic discipline of equanimity. His hands, which are the six pristine cognitions, are endowed with blazing hand-implements or seals of precious pristine cognition; and he has three heads, which are the inconceivable Buddha-body, speech and mind. [6] ...

[Tibetan]

sku mdun-dang rgyab-med-pa / thams-cad-du zhal thal-le-bar gsal-
zhing mtshan-dang dpe-byad-du ldan-pa / bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa thams-
cad-du / sku-gsung-thugs sna-tshogs-par kun-tu snang-ba / thabs-dang
shes-rab-kyi zhabs-gnyis mnyam-pa'i brtul-zhugs-kyis skyil-mo-krung-du
bzhus-pa / ye-shes drug-gi phyag ye-shes rin-po-che'i phyag-rgya 'bar-ba-
can / sku-gsung-thugs bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa'i dbu-gsum-dang ldan-pa /
[6]

Commentary:

To Illustrate that the buddha-nature perceives all living beings continuously and is not indifferent. the buddha-body (sku) is present, outwardly and inwardly radiating its nature of clarity and light. Indeed it is not coarse. From whichever direction, zenith or nadir, of its nature of spirituality it is beheld, the visage appears to be revealed. It is without (med-pa) description in the words, "This is its front (mdun) or this is its rear (rgyab)". such as are visible in the case of ordinary living beings. Frontally perceived among all retinues of the maṇḍala-clusters, the maṇḍala of his visage radiates penetratingly in all directions (thams-cad-du zhal thal-le-bar gsal).

And the buddha-body is also endowed with (du-ldan-pa) the thirty-two noble major marks (mtshan) and eighty noble minor marks (dpe-byad) to illustrate that it possesses pristine cognition and excellent enlightened attributes. Now the major and minor marks have both uncommon and common aspects: in the former case they comprise the thirty-two major marks, namely the sixteen male spiritual warriors who represent the energy of the sixteen pristine cognitions, along with the sixteen female spiritual warriors who represent the object of the former. the energy of the sixteen aspects of reality's expanse. They also comprise the eighty minor marks, which derive from the sixteen male spiritual warriors, each of whom has five kinds of head-ornament corresponding to the five respective enlightened families and symbolising the five pristine cognitions. The sixteen objects (i.e. the female spiritual warriors) have no head-ornaments because they illustrate the expanse of reality. These (spiritual warriors) are established to be the major and minor marks in the sense that the nature of the central deity is beautifully arrayed and well endowed with the excellence of the retinue. Just as an array of flowers is adorned by the anthers and petals of its flowers.

In the latter case, there are both the common major and minor marks. Among them, the thirty-two major marks are enumerated as follows in the Ornament Of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786, vv. 1317):

His hands and feet are marked by (the lines of the doctrinal) wheel
And his feet are (firm) like those of a tortoise;
The fingers and toes of his hands and feet are Joined by webs;
His hands and feet are soft and supple;
His body has seven well-proportioned parts;
And his toes and fingers are long, his arches broad,
His body tall and straight;
His ankle-bones are inconspicuous, and his body hairs curl upwards:
His calves are like those of an antelope;
His arms long and beautiful;
His sexual organ is supreme in its contraction;
His skin has a golden complexion, and his skin is delicate;
His body-hairs are well-grown, each distinctly curling to the right;
His visage is adorned with a hair-ringlet (ūrṇakeśa).
His chest like that of a lion;

His shoulders are well-rounded, the flesh between his collar and shoulder bones broad;

To him even unpleasant tastes appear to be supreme tastes;
 His body is symmetrical like a banyan tree;
 On his head he has an uṣṇīṣa protuberance,
 His tongue is long and beautiful;
 He has a Brahmā-like voice, and lion-like jaws;
 His teeth are pure white, equal (in size), and close-fitting;
 They are forty in number;
 His eyes are sapphire blue, and his eyelashes like those of a supreme
 cow—
 These are the thirty-two major marks.[1]

The eighty minor marks are enumerated as follows in the same text (v.
 21-32):

The nails of the sage are copper-coloured, glossy and elevated;
 His toes and fingers are rounded, broad and tapering;
 His energy channels are inconspicuous and unknotted;
 His ankle bones are Inconspicuous, his feet equal (in size);
 His stride is that of a lion, an elephant, a bird.
 Or a lordly bull.
 It is clockwise, elegant and upright;
 His bodily form is lustrous, cleansed and proportionate;
 It is clean, soft and pure;
 His genitals are fully perfected:
 The proportions (kho-lag) of his body are harmonious;
 His gait is even; and both his eyes are pure:
 His flesh is youthful; and his body unimpaired and broad:
 His body is most solid;
 His limbs are well-proportioned;
 His vision is unobscured and pure;
 His sides are round, firm, and do not bulge out;
 His abdomen does not sag;
 His navel is deep, and curling to the right;
 From all sides he is pleasant to behold;
 His conduct is clean, and on his body
 There is no trace of black moles;
 His hands are soft as cotton wool;
 The lines on his hands are clear, deep and long:
 His visage is not too long;
 And his lips are red like the bim-pa berry;
 His tongue is supple, slender and red.
 And his voice is like thunder;
 His speech is sweet and soft, his teeth round.
 Sharp, white, equal (in size), and small;
 While his nose is prominent:
 His eyes are very pure and large;
 While his eyelashes are thick;
 And (his eyes coloured) like lotus petals;
 His eyebrows are long, soft and glossy;
 With hairs of equal length;
 His arms are long and broad, his ears equal (in size)
 And free from defects;
 His forehead is well-formed and broad;

While his head is large;
The hairs of his head are black as a bee.
Thick, soft not shaggy, and not rough,
While it has a fragrant scent
Which captivates the human mind;
The glorious heart-orb (śrīvatsa) and the auspicious
Svāstika emblem (on his hands and soles)
Make up the eighty.
These are claimed to be the Buddhas' noble minor marks.[2]

From the glorious heart-orb downwards these marks are identical (for all buddhas), whereas the others (from the heart-orb upwards) differ (for each buddha).

In the expanse of reality, in space, and in every inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa thams-cad-du) world-system which requires to be trained, he appears universally as the diverse buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs sna-tshogs-par kun-tu snang-ba), which are spontaneously present inexhaustible wheels of adornment. When he appears as such in the Buddha-field of reality's expanse free from conceptual elaboration: the inexhaustible wheel of adornment of buddha-body is the male and female consort Samantabhadra, i.e. the buddha-body of reality transcending conceptual elaboration; the inexhaustible buddha-speech is inexpressible, inaudible and essenceless; and the inexhaustible buddha-mind constantly pacifies all conceptual elaborations, and is without partiality or bias.

In the Buddha-field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array which manifests in and of itself as the infinity of space: the inexhaustible buddha-body is equal to space and is adorned with the major and minor marks of perfect rapture; the inexhaustible buddha-speech comprehends its expressed meaning by emanating light from the maṇḍala of his visage; and the inexhaustible Buddha-mind is present in the character of the five pristine cognitions.

Then in the world-systems of the ten directions, the fields where living beings are trained and which are equal to the confines of space: the inexhaustible buddha-body comprises both the agreeable and disagreeable classes of beings who train each in accord with his or her needs, including buddhas, bodhisattvas, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, ordinary persons, the aged, Invalids, deceased beings, gods, nāgas and animals, and it also comprises the benefits which emerge for sentient beings and their immeasurable forms, such as lotus flowers, wish-granting trees, boats, villages and meadows; the inexhaustible buddha-speech resounds as the various kinds of doctrinal speech because sound emerges from the languages of different living beings, and from lotus flowers, wish-granting trees and so forth: and the inexhaustible buddha-mind appears to act on behalf of living beings because it qualitatively knows (the view) and quantitatively knows (phenomena). It is impossible to consider Intellectually these acts of benefit as specifically this or that because they are performed by inconceivable emanations of the buddhas.

You may ask, on the other hand, why the inexpressible speech of the

buddha-body of reality and the buddha-body of perfect rapture is in fact called speech. At the limit of sound and verbal expression there is Indeed nothing but the inexpressible to be understood; and through that very (Buddha-speech) the Inexpressible is actually understood. Similarly, all words are a gathering of syllables and these too are gathered in the unborn syllable A. Thus the nucleus of buddha-speech is the meaning of the syllable A, the most supreme buddha-speech of the Teacher himself.

There is a sūtra which accordingly says:[3]

The sons of the conquerors say nothing at all.
They speak extensively that which is unspoken.

The sages endowed with the emanational body who appear to those requiring training seem to speak through intonations which have sixty aspects. These then appear as buddha-speech in the perception of those to be trained and through the amassed spirituality of the buddhas. However in the manner of an echo, nothing is actually spoken.

The Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024) says:

Just as the sound emitted by an echo
Does accord with the perception of others.
But is non-conceptual and uncontrived.
So the speech of the Tathāgatas
Emerges according to the perception of others
But abides neither externally nor internally.

And in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

From the birth of the Tathāgata until he attained nirvāṇa in a full night, he did not utter a single syllable of doctrine through the appearance of words and letters, but that is what was understood in the perception of those to be trained.

There are some who disagree that this text is connected at all with the emanational body. They contradict the explanation (of this very text) that buddha-body, speech and mind appear in every inconceivable (world-system). The term “emanational body” is in this context applied to the six sages, so that it may be incidentally described as “an Introduction given by the six sages”. The statement that it is incorrect for a single teaching to belong to two teachers is an argument taken out of context. Here, there are not two teachers because the buddha-body of perfect rapture is the ground and the six sages are revealed as its retinue.

His two legs (zhabs-gnyis) are to symbolise that he possesses the pristine cognition of skillful means (thabs) or great compassion and discriminative awareness (dang shes-rab) or emptiness. Folded together, they assume the posture of (kyi skyil-mo krung-du bzugs-pa) the ascetic discipline (brtul-zhugs) where all conflicting emotions are of the nature of equanimity (mnyam-pa'i) to symbolise that he does not abide in extremes of existence or quiescence, or the posture of indestructible reality, which symbolises that he remains in the essence of great pristine cognition.

There are some who incorrectly hold that the female consort has not actually been explained at this point. The genuine queen (Dhātviśvarī) is in fact present as the expanse of this apparition.[4]

Then there are his six hands (phyag) which are (gi) to illustrate the six pristine cognitions (ye-shes drug). namely, the five pristine cognitions and the pristine cognition of the pure expanse. They are endowed with blazing ('bar-ba-can) limitless rays of light which emerge from their hand-implements or seals (phyag-rgya). including the vajra, as a symbol of (-i) their precious (rin-po-che) nature. This is because various desired necessities emerge from that pristine cognition (ye-shes) where buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities are without duality. These (implements) respectively symbolise that the six (defects of) envy, nonsensical morality, rage, idleness, distraction and nonsensical talk about discriminative awareness are subdued. It is not the case, as some hold, that the central deity has six hands and the others have two hands, because that is taught in the common (tantras alone).[5]

Now, (the hand-implements in question) are the vajra, gemstone, wheel, lotus, crossed vajra, and bell. (The buddhas of) the different enlightened families each hold their own hand-implement in the right hand of their basic pair of hands, and in the corresponding left hand they wield the bell. These are held close to the heart, while the other (two pairs), grasping (their respective implements), are extended in different ways. Buddhaguhya further asserts that the six hands hold six gemstones which are blazing and eight-faceted.[6]

He has three heads (dbu-gsum dang-ldan-pa) which are (-i) to illustrate that he possesses the inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa) inexhaustible adornments of buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs). The basic visage of the central deity (i.e. Vairocana) is dark blue, his right one is white and his left one red. The basic visage of Akṣobhya is white, his right one is dark blue and his left one red. The basic visage of Ratnasambhava is yellow, his right one is white and the left one red. The basic visage of Amitābha is red, his right one is white and the left one dark blue. And the basic visage of Amoghasiddhi is green, his right one is white and the left one red.

The latter (see p. 405) is an explanation of the different male and female consorts which includes both an overview and an interlinear commentary.

i. The overview (80.3-85.1) is in two parts, the first revealing all things as the primordial maṇḍala of the deities and the second classifying them according to their enlightened families.

As to the first, there are those of the past who have questioned why (this text) does not mention by name (the deities) of the five enlightened families such as Vairocana but instead mentions them by the names of their five (corresponding) components—"the king of consciousness" and so forth. This (view) however appears to lack analysis. The deities are not mentioned by the conceptual names of the five components and so forth.

The reality contained in the expression “king of consciousness” is revealed to surpass the five components, and is similar to that which is expressed in the term “great nirvāṇa”. This is because the buddhas are not described in terms of sorrow, and because their sublime reality is recognised.

Accordingly the Hevajratāntra (T. 417-418) says:

“That which is in pursuit of great desire”
Describes the pristine cognition
In which bliss and emptiness are without duality.

The Guhyasamāja (T. 442-3) also actually reveals that expressions such as “indestructible reality of hatred” refer to the mirrorlike pristine cognition and so forth. One should therefore know that the term “king” refers to the greatness which is Vairocana and so forth, and that in the case of the retinue (the deities) are also described as “the great Bodhisattva of indestructible hearing” (i.e. Vajrapāṇi) and so forth. If (the deities) were described in conceptual terms, the word “consciousness” would not appropriately refer to “the king of the enlightened family”. The particularly sublime reality that is expressed (here) indicates that in the circumstances of saṃsāra consciousness abides as the seed or enlightened family of the Tathāgatas.

Although Buddhahood is naturally pure, during impure circumstances (the buddhas) appear as the five components of living beings, formed from the maturation (of deeds). When slightly purer than that they appear in the physical bodies formed from the aspiration of empowered beings and the like. And when utterly pure, they appear as the buddha-body and pristine cognition of the conquerors. For example, the identical element water is perceived by denizens of hell as fire, by tormented spirits as puss and blood, by human beings as something that is pure and desirable, by animals as a drink, by gods as nectar, by beings of the pure lands as a river of nectar, and by accomplished masters as Māmakī. Alternatively, this accords with the previous description given in the example of the element mercury (which appears differently when compounded and heated).

Now, in Impure situations, (the buddhas) appear as the five components, the eighteen sensory bases, the twelve activity fields and so forth;^[7] but when pure they appear as the maṇḍala which comprises the buddha-bodies of the five enlightened families and their retinue of male and female spiritual warriors, just as when one is afflicted by some phlegmatic eye disease a conch shell appears to be yellow but, when cured, the shell appears to be white. Moreover, just as the image or form of the conch shell is not abandoned when one is afflicted by some phlegmatic (eye disease), so during impure (perception) the reality of the buddhas is harmoniously present. And, just as the conch is actually white though it appears to be yellow, the outer and Inner phenomena along with their mass of conceptions all appear to be impure, and yet they are actually pure Buddha-fields and inexhaustible wheels of adornment. the buddha-body. speech and mind.

The second. i.e. the classification of the different (components or deities). is fivefold:

First, the component of consciousness has eight aggregates when classified. The consciousness of the ground-of-all is the basis on which consciousness arises. without proceeding to its object, as on the pure surface of a mirror. The consciousness of the intellect is that which refers to objects of general concept and which experiences objects through a subsequent intellectual appreciation. The intellect of conflicting emotions comprises the consciousness which applies proof and refutation; and the consciousnesses of the five senses are the five non-conceptual perceptions such as the vision of form.[8]

The sensation-functions of sight, hearing and contact are non-conceptual, and the consciousness which differentiates them is the intellect. That which applies refutation and proof in relation to them is the Intellect of conflicting emotions. The consciousness of the five senses and the intellect alone do not accumulate deeds, but it is by the intellect of conflicting emotions that deeds are accumulated on the basis of the ground-of-all.

The ground-of-all which supports all these (aggregates of consciousness) is unconceived and unindicated per se. It is present, for example, in one's own consciousness when it is without Ideas or scrutiny and without radiance or clarity in respect of any object. As such it is universal. On the other hand, the consciousness of the ground-of-all refers to the circumstance under which consciousness is radiant and clear but does not proceed towards its object. The five senses clearly perceive the object, and the intellect is simply that which discernibly apprehends it. The Intellect of conflicting emotions generates proof and refutation in relation to it. in this context, the consciousness of the ground-of-all is recognised as the sublime reality or mirror-like (pristine cognition).

The component of feeling is threefold: in relation to objects, (feelings) may be pleasant and blissful, unpleasant and sorrowful, or neutral sensations which generate equanimity. The component of perception is also threefold, comprising objectification which is extensive, minute or mediocre.[9]

The component of habitual tendencies comprises the fifty-one mental events: There are relational propensities (Idan-pa'i 'du-byed) including the five ever present ones, namely contact, attention, feelings, perception and motivation; the five object-determined ones, namely inclination, adherence, recollection, contemplation and discriminative awareness; the eleven positive functions of every positive attitude, namely, faith, decorum, decency, carefulness, equanimity, non-violence, perseverance, lucidity, detachment, non-hatred, and non-delusion; the six basic conflictins emotions, namely, desire, hatred, arrogance, ignorance, view of mundane aggregates and doubt; the twenty subsidiary conflictins emotions, namely, jealousy, avarice, dishonesty, deception, pride, delusion, agitation, distrust, laziness, excitability, carelessness, forgetfulness, inattentiveness, mischief, indecorum, indecency, anger, malice, dissimulation, and spitefulness; and the four variables, namely, regret, drowsiness, ideas, and scrutiny. Apart from feeling and perception, the other forty-nine (mental events) among these, along with all the

nonrelational propensities (mi-lan-pa'i 'du-byed) including names and their symbolic representations, which actively create the dichotomy of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are recognised to be the essence of the pristine cognition of accomplishment, the sublime reality of Amoghasiddhi.[10]

The component of form, when classified, has fifteen aspects, namely, the four material elements of form—earth, water, fire and air; the five objects—form, sound, smell, taste, and contact: the five sense-organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body: and the imperceptible form (which is continuously present). Among these fifteen, the imperceptible form is recognised to be the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, the particularly sublime reality subsumed in Akṣobhya, while the other fourteen kinds of form are subsumed in Buddhalocanā and so forth.[11] ii. The Interlinear commentary (85.1-87.4) concerns both the central deities of the essential expanse, and their retinue which is not different in nature.

[The first (includes the male and female central deities, of which the section on the former comments on Ch. 1.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The phrase 'di-yi sku-ni bdun-dag mtho-ba-dang. “his body has seven well-proportioned parts”, indicates that the shoulders, trunk and backs of the four limbs are full and rounded. See also Har Dayal, op. cit. and E. Conze, *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

[2]:

“His sides are round...” (dku-zlum). sic! sku-zlum.

[3]:

N.L.

[4]:

As stated below, p. 421, Ākāśadhātviśvarī represents the expanse of apparition (snang-ba'i dbyings) and Is the consort of the central deity.

[5]:

In accordance with Anuttarayogatantra, all the deities are multi-armed and in union with their respective consorts, except the six sages (thub-pa drug). This distinction between common and uncommon tantras is drawn by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha'i mdzod. pp. 292-294, where it is explained that in Kriyātantra the deities regard each other. In Ubhayatantra they smile at each other, in Yogatantra they embrace, and in Anuttarayogatantra they are in sexual union.

[6]:

On the hand-implements held respectively by the central deities, see below. Ch. 6, pp. 649-651, Ch. 8, pp. 723-731.

[7]:

For enumerations of the five components (asamāsamapañcaskandha). see Mahāvyutpatti 104-108; for the eighteen sensory bases (aṣṭadaśadhātu), see Mahāvyutpatti 2040-2058; and for the twelve activity fields (dvādaśāyatana), see Mahāvyutpatti 2027-2039. English equivalents are given in NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[8]:

I.e. consciousness of the ground-of-all (ālavavijñāna), consciousness of the intellect (manovijñāna), consciousness of the intellect endowed with conflicting emotions (kliṣṭamanovijñāna), and the consciousnesses of the five senses (pañcendriyavijñāna). See above note 17; also NSTB, glossary of enumerations; and on the purity of these eight aggregates of consciousness, see above, pp. 394-395.

[9]:

I.e. sukhavedanā, duḥkhavedanā. and samavedanā; apramāṇyasaṃjñā, parittasaṃjñā, and mahadgataṣaṃjñā.

[10]:

On these fifty-one mental events (sems-byung lnga-bcu rtsa-gcig), see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 68b-70a and glossary of enumerations; also Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, yid-bzhin mdzod-kyi grub-mtha' bsdus-pa. pp. 13ff.. and its translation in H.V. Guenther, Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice. pp. 63-64. The relational propensities number twenty-three. See H.V. Guenther, op. cit., p. 64.

[11]:

Tibetan rnam-par rig-byed ma-vin-pa'i gzugs refers to imperceptible forms which maintain certain behavioural patterns throughout past, present and future. See Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, mkhas-pa'i tshul-la 'jug-pa'i sgo. folios 4a-b; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 69a-b.

Text 1.7 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.7]

... The Transcendent Lord was present as such in (the form of) the Tathāgata who is king of consciousness, the Tathāgata who is king of form, the Tathāgata who is king of feeling, the Tathāgata who is king of

perception, and the Tathāgata who is king of habitual tendencies. All these too were resplendent in their (respective) colours—dark blue, white, yellow, scarlet, and green. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

bcom-ldan-'das de-bzhin gshegs-pa rnam-par shes-pa'i rgyal-po-dang /
de-bzhin gshegs-pa gzugs-kyi rgyal-po-dang / de-bzhin gshegs-pa tshor-ba'i
rgyal-po-dang / de-bzhin gshegs-pa 'du-shes-kyi rgyal-po-dang / de-bzhin
gshegs-pa 'du-byed-kyi rgyal-po-dang / de-dag kun-kyang mthing-kha-dang
/ dkar-po-dang / ser-po-dang / le-brgan-dang / ljang-khu'i mdog-tu 'tsher-
ba / [7]

Commentary:

[The Interlinear commentary (85.1-87.4) concerns both the central deities of the essential expanse, and their retinue which is not different in nature.]

[The first includes the male and female central deities, of which the section on the former (comments on Ch. 1.7):]

The Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan-'das) was present as such in five forms, namely the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Vairocana who is king of consciousness (rnam-par gshegs-pa'i rgyal-po), the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Akṣobhya who is king of form (gzugs-kyi rgyal-po), the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Ratnasambhava who is king of feeling (tshor-ba'i rgyal-po), the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Amitābha who is king of perception ('du-shes-kyi rgyal-po), and the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Amoghasiddhi who is king of habitual tendencies ('du-byed-kyi rgyal-po). All these (de-dag kun) five enlightened families too (kyang) have their distinct body-colours: Vairocana is dark-blue (mthing-kha) because his mirror-like pristine cognition is unchanging. Akṣobhya is white (dkar-po) because the pristine cognition of reality's expanse is free from all stains. Ratnasambhava is yellow (gser-po) because his pristine cognition of sameness is endowed with many enlightened attributes of greatness. Amitābha is scarlet (le-brgan). i.e. red, because his pristine cognition of particular discernment hankers for the benefit of living beings; and Amoghasiddhi is green (ljang-gu) because his pristine cognition of accomplishment performs diverse acts of benefit for sentient beings. Radiant and resplendent in their (respective) colours (mdog-tu 'tsher-ba). the nature of the five enlightened families is dazzling and brilliantly clear.

[The section on the female central deities (comments on Ch. 1.8):]

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... Also present was the genuine queen who is the expanse of apparition, the one who is the expanse of solidity, the one who is the expanse of liquidity, the one who is the expanse of warmth, and the one who is the expanse of mobility. Without duality in respect of the host of such queens, they entirely and Infinitely pervaded the expanse of reality. Filling it, just as, for example, a pod of sesame seeds, they were pervasively present. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

btsun-mo dam-pa snang-ba'i dbyings-dang / sra-ba'i dbyings-dang / mnyen-pa'i dbyings-dang / dro-ba'i dbyings-dang / bskyod-pa'i dbyings la-sogs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang gnyis-su med-par chos-kyi dbyings kun-tu mtha'-yas-par khyab-pa-ni/ 'di-lta-ste/ dper-na/ til-gyi gang-bu bzhin-du gang-nas khyab-par bzhugs-so / [8]

Commentary:

[The section on the female central deities comments on Ch. 1.8:]

Present there also were the female consorts of these (Tathāgatas). These are given the title queen (btsun-mo) because they are the basis of enjoyable objects, because they are the female consorts of the central deities, and because they are revered as a royal family endowed with enlightened attributes; and they are described as genuine (dam-pa) because they surpass others. The nature of the celestial expanse is Akāśadhātviśvarī, who is mistress of the expanse (dbyings-dang) of space and the essence of apparition (snang-ba'i) because she clarifies without obscuration the vastness of reality and the expanse of enlightened attributes. Buddhalocanā is the one who is the expanse of solidity (sra-ba'i dbyings-dang) because, in the manner of earth which is supported and supportive, she supports the unchanging essence and its enlightened attributes. Māmakī is the one who is the expanse of liquidity (mnyen-pa'i dbyings-dang) because, in the manner of water which sustains human beings with its moisture, she mollifies the minds of living beings. Pāṇḍaravāsini is the one who is the expanse of warmth (dro-ba'i dbyings-dang) because, in the manner of fire which burns and manifests, she burns conflicting emotions and clarifies all that is knowable: and Samayatārā is the one who is the expanse of mobility (bskyod-pa'i dbyings) because, in the manner of air which performs acts of movement and lifting, she is unobstructed for the sake of living beings and is the basis of their sustenance.

The Tathāgatas were present, sexually united with the entire host of queens (btsun-mo'i tshogs) of the enlightened families, such (la-sogs-pa) as these, without exception, none excepted, omitting none at all. They were without duality in respect of (gnyis-su med-par) of skillful means and discriminative awareness.[1]

The nature, presence, number or enumeration of these (deities), which has been revealed, primordially pervades all apparitional existence without

conjunction or disjunction. Here in particular, the appearances of the buddha-body of perfect rapture entirely and infinitely pervaded (kun-tu mtha'-yas-par khyab-pa) their object, the expanse of reality (chos-kyi dbyings), throughout the infinity of space, with the great appearances of buddha-body, speech and mind, the inexhaustible wheels of adornment. Filling it (gang) with the maṇḍala of buddha-body and pristine cognition so that there were no intervening spaces, just as a ('di-lta-ste) full-grown pod of sesame seeds (til-gyi gang-bu) for example (dper-na), they were pervasively present (nas khyab-par bzhugs-so) everywhere.

Although in general all phenomenal existence is primordially pervaded (by buddha-body, speech and mind), here it applies to the appearance of the sugatas alone. One should know they subsequently become radiant in all maṇḍalas including those of the higher male and female consorts of the five enlightened families (i.e. buddhas) and those of the lower male and female spiritual warriors (i.e. bodhisattvas).[2] The wrathful deities are not however explained (at this juncture). If you ask why, it is because for a beginner they are hard to understand and little needed.[3]

[The Excellent Retinue (87.4-94.4):]

Thirdly (see p. 357) there is the detailed exegesis of the retinue, which includes both the natural retinue (of Samantabhadra) which has already been revealed and the retinue of spirituality. The latter is threefolds The male & female consorts who are the inner spiritual warriors (of the maṇḍala), the male and female consorts who are the outer spiritual warriors (of the maṇḍala), and the male and female consorts who are the gatekeepers (of the maṇḍala).

[i. The first of these has two aspects, of which the former concerning the four male consorts (comments on Ch. 1.9)]:

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Sanskrit prajñopāya. the male consort representing skillful means and the female consort discriminative awareness. On the phrase ma-lus mi-lus lus-pa med-pa. see above, p. 353.

[2]:

The present context is that of the Ghanavyūha realm, where the sambhogakāya is manifest in and of itself (rang-snang) and not that in which the five enlightened families become extraneously manifest to bodhisattvas, or that in which all phenomenal existence is pervaded by buddha-body, speech and mind.

[3]:

Tibetan phul-chung-ba 'i phyir. See above, p. 57, note 100.

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[Guhya garbha-Tantra, Text section 1.9]

... Then there was the great Bodhisattva of indestructible sight, the great Bodhisattva of indestructible hearing, the great Bodhisattva of indestructible scent, the great Bodhisattva of indestructible savour, [9] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje mthong-ba-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje thos-pa-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje snom-pa-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje myong-pa-dang / [9]

Commentary:

Then (de-nas). the explanation of the central deities belonging to the five enlightened families should be followed by an explanation of the retinue of the male spiritual warriors. in the manner of the Teacher himself (Śākyamuni) who was a great bodhisattva (byang-chub chen-po). the retinues which arise from the disposition of that self-manifesting spirituality are purified (byang) of all obscurations and in their buddha-mind all enlightened attributes without exception are perfected (chub). Great (chen-po) because they are themselves buddhas, they are superior to terrestrial spiritual warriors. There were present four such spiritual warriors of consciousness who have indestructible (rdo-rje) reality in that they are without duality of expanse and pristine cognition, or of appearance and emptiness, and they are free from decay.

(Concerning the term “indestructible reality”), it says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

Because it is neither solid nor empty at the core.

Neither to be cut off nor analysed,

Neither to be burned nor destroyed.

Emptiness should be expressed as indestructible reality.

It also means that they have subdued all obscurations and cannot be further harmed by obscuration.

The Extensive Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) says:

The nature of indestructible reality

Has subdued all obscurations.

And cannot be harmed in any respect.

The naturally present pristine cognition,

Deity among deities,

Penetrates all things.

Kṣiṭigarbha is (the great bodhisattva of Indestructible) sight (a mthong-ba-dang), so-called because his buddha-eyes penetrate their five objects and perceive reality in a single savour, surpassing the consciousness of the eye which sees form. Vajrapāṇi is the great bodhisattva of indestructible hearing (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje thos-pa-dang), so-called because his buddha-ears penetrate their five objects and listen to the real nature in a single savour, surpassing the consciousness of the ear which hears sound. Ākāśagarbha is the great bodhisattva of indestructible scent (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje snom-pa-dang), so-called because his buddha-nose penetrates its five objects and senses the uncreated nature in a single savour, surpassing the consciousness of the nose which senses smell; and Avalokiteśvara is the great bodhisattva of indestructible savour (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje myong-ba), so-called because his buddha-tongue penetrates its five objects and savours the non-dual nature in a single savour, surpassing the consciousness of the tongue which merely savours taste.

[The latter, concerning their four female consorts (who are the Inner female spiritual warriors of the retinue, comments on Ch. 1.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.10]

... the assembled host of the queen who is seen, the one who is heard, the one who is scented, and the one who is savoured. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

btsun-mo mthong-bar bya-ba-dang / mnyan-par bya-ba-dang / bsnam-par bya-ba-dang / myong-bar bya-ba'i tshogs-dang / [10]

Commentary:

[Concerning their four female consorts (who are the Inner female spiritual warriors of the retinue):]

There was [the assembled host of (-i' tshogs-dang)] Lāsyā, the queen who is seen (btsun-mo mthong-bar bya-ba-dang), i.e. the form or apparitional object of pristine cognition; along with those of Mālyā, the one who is heard (mnyan-par bya-ba-dang): Gītā, the one who is scented (bsnam-par bya-ba): and Nartī, the one who is savoured (myong-bar bya-ba-dang), i.e. the delight of (pristine cognition's) display. Although these are sometimes Interchanged, there is no contradiction because they are merely names. There are actually held to be four Inner kinds of Lāsyā. When verbally expressed, Gītā refers to their sound which is heard, and likewise Dhūpā to their scent which is scented.

[ii. The section on the four (outer) male spiritual warriors of the sense-organs (comments on Ch. 1.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.11]

... There was the great Bodhisattva of indestructible eyes, the great Bodhisattva of indestructible ears, the great Bodhisattva of indestructible nose, and the great Bodhisattva of indestructible tongue, [11] ...

[Tibetan]

byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje mthong-byed-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje thos-byed-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje snom-byed-dang / byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje myong-byed-dang / [11]

Commentary:

[Concerning their four female consorts (who are the Inner female spiritual warriors of the retinue):]

[The section on the four (outer) male spiritual warriors of the sense-organs:]

These are respectively: Maitreya, (the great bodhisattva of indestructible) eyes (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje mthong-byed-dang), whose unobscured indestructible buddha-eyes support the apprehension of their five objects, surpassing the sense-organ of the eye which resembles a sesame flower; Nivāraṇaviṣkhambhī (the great bodhisattva of indestructible) ears (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje thos-byed-dang), whose unimpaired sense-organs of buddha-ear support their five clear objects, surpassing the sense-organ of the ear which resembles a twisting ravine; Samantabhadra (the great bodhisattva of indestructible) nose (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje snom-byed-dang), whose sense-organ of the buddha-nose supports the penetration of its five objects, surpassing the sense-organ of the nose which resembles a straight copper bodkin needle; and Mañjuśrī (the great bodhisattva of indestructible) tongue (byang-chub chen-po rdo-rje myong-byed-dang) whose supreme taste of buddha-speech supports the penetration of its five objects, surpassing the sense-organ of the tongue which resembles a half-moon.[1]

[The section on their female consorts (who are also outer spiritual warriors of the maṇḍala, comments on Ch. 1.12):]

[Read next page]

[1]:

As explained below, pp. 430-431, each of these Buddha-sense organs supports the apprehension of five types of senseobject, and these are consequently subdivided according to twelve hundred sensory attributes.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.12]

... the assembled host of the queen of time past, the one of time present, the one of time future, and the one of time unpredictable. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

btsun-mo 'das-pa-dang / da-ltar-dang / 'byung-ba-dang / ma-byon-pa'i tshogs-dang / [12]

Commentary:

[The section on their female consorts (who are also outer spiritual warriors of the maṇḍala):]

They are respectively: the queen of time past (btsun-mo 'das-pa-dang) who appears as Dhūpā to illustrate that she enters the vision of pristine cognition, unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the past, the nature in which phenomena of the past actually radiate as they really are, surpassing those phenomena which were known in the past and are now non-existent. having been destroyed; the one of time present (da-ltar-dang) who appears as Puṣpā to illustrate that she enters the vision of pristine cognition, unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the present, in which all phenomena become meaningless in terms of aeons, surpassing those which are merely the actual appearances of the sense-organs; the one of time future ('byung-ba-dang) who appears as Ālokā to illustrate that she enters the vision of pristine cognition, unobstructed and unimpeded with respect to the future because phenomena of the future are seen in the present, just like a leaf of kyurara in the palm of the hand, surpassing those objects of the future which have not become manifest; and the assembled host (tshogs-dang) including the one of time unpredictable (ma-byon-pa'i), indefinite in its moment of emergence, who appears as Gandhā to illustrate that she is present as the pristine cognition of sameness with respect to the four times, the reality in which naturally present appearances do not change from their disposition, as it really is.

As for the way in which past, present and future are known, they are clearly known in the manner of the signs of the past and future which arise along with the present when they are drawn prognostically on the surface

of an (oracular) mirror.[1]

Accordingly it says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Past, present and future events.

As many as there are, become manifest.

[iii. The section on the male and female consorts who are the gatekeepers (of the maṇḍala) has two parts, of which the former concerning the male consorts (comments on Ch. 1.13):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Sanskrit prasena. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 3. p. 155

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.13]

... There was the great subjugator of indestructible contact. the great subjugator of the indestructible subject of contact. the great subjugator of the indestructible object of contact, and the great subjugator of the indestructible consciousness of contact. [13] ...

[Tibetan]

'joms-pa chen-po reg-pa-dang / 'joms-pa chen-po reg-byed-dang / 'joms-pa chen-po reg-bya-dang / 'joms-pa chen-po reg-shes-dang/ [13]

Commentary:

[The section on the male & female consorts who are the gatekeepers (of the maṇḍala) has two parts, of which the former concerning the male consorts:]

It is explained that they correspond to the following description which is found in the Subsequent Tantra of Guhyasamāja (T. 643):

If this pristine cognition, the enlightenment
Of the buddhas is known to be
Without decay, without consciousness,
Without description and without conception.
Bliss will be obtained.

The subjugator ('joms-pa) is skillful means, great (chen-po) in discriminative awareness. He is said to be indestructible (rdo-rje) because venomous spirits such as Māra and Yama are disciplined by great

emanations who possess these two attributes. Now, within the threefold process of sensory interaction which occurs when the sensation of physical contact (reg-pa-dang) is generated, there is the body or subject of contact (reg-byed-dang), the object of contact (reg-bya-dang), and the consciousness of the body or consciousness of contact (reg-shes-dang) which derives from the encounter (of these two). Respectively, these are represented by Amṛtakuṇḍalin, Aśvottama, Mahābala, and Yamāntaka whose Buddha-bodies penetrate the five sense-objects or sensory bases of contact, surpassing ordinary (contact).

Then there is also verbal contact, which is vocalised. Although in this text it is the four aspects of physical (contact) which are primarily and actually revealed, those of both speech and mind are implied. Now, when the sensation of verbal contact is generated, there is the sound or subject of expression, the object of that expression, and the consciousness of that sound which derives from the accumulated conditions of these two aspects of expression. These appear respectively as the four wrathful deities beginning with Amṛtakuṇḍalin to illustrate that Buddha-speech free from all obscurations of tone penetrates its five objects, surpassing the euphonous, discordant and neutral sounds which (ordinarily) emerge.

Then there is mental (contact) during which phenomena come into being. When the activity field of phenomena, the object of the intellect, is generated, there is the intellect or subject of perception, the forms of general concept or diverse objects of perception, and the consciousness of bliss, sorrow, refutation and proof which derives from the encounter of these two. Surpassing this generation, the four wrathful deities manifest In and of themselves at the gates (of the maṇḍala) through the energy of pristine cognition to illustrate that the unobscured pristine cognition of the buddhas is actualised without regard for the apprehension of general concepts and is free from all desires and hatred.

These (gatekeepers) are none other than the four pristine cognitions which realise (respectively) that there is neither creation nor decay, there is nothing to be expressed, there is nothing which perceives, and there is nothing at all (physical, verbal or mental).

[The section on their female consorts (comments on Ch. 1.14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.14]

... There was the queen who is not eternal, the one who is not transient, the one who is selfless, and the one who is signless. The assembly (in maṇḍalas) such as this is inexpressible, and present without duality. [14]

...

[Tibetan]

btsun-mo rtag-par ma-yin-pa-dang / chad-par ma-yin-pa-dang / bdag-tu
ma-yin-pa-dang / mtshan-mar ma-yin-pa la-sogs-pa / de-lta-bu'i tshogs
brjod-kyis mi-lang-ba-dang / gnyis-su med-par bzhugs-so / [14]

Commentary:

[The section on their female consorts:]

They are respectively: Aṅkuṣā, (the queen, btsun-mo) who essentially is not eternal (rtag-par ma-yin-pa-dang) with respect to all things such as form—illustrating that appearances are like reflected images, not existing in reality, and Illustrating that she draws in sentient beings with loving kindness and liberality which are her attributes; Pāśā, the one who is not transient (chad-par ma-yin-pa-dang) with respect to all things such as sound, because she illustrates that these respective appearances are essentially not abandoned but resemble a mirage and because she draws in sentient beings with compassion and gentle speech which are her attributes: Sphoṭā, the one who essentially is selfless (bdag-tu ma-yin-pa-dang), in whom mental phenomena are not apprehended as self-existing through refutation and proof but are dreamlike, symbolising that she overpowers sentient beings with sympathetic joy and empathy which are her attributes; and Gaṇṭhā, the one who is signless (mtshan-mar ma-yin-pa) and without substance in respect of the essence of all phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, illustrating that it lacks Independent existence from the beginning in the manner of an emanation and that she establishes sentient beings in quiescence through purposeful conduct and great equanimity which are her attributes.

Now on the Buddha-level, each of the five consciousnesses associated with the sense-organs respectively penetrates five sense-objects.

Concerning this, It says in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

When the five sense-organs become extraneous.

All objects are penetrated.

Altogether there are twelve hundred

Sensory attributes which emerge.

Now the sense-organ of the eye is at the outset analysed according to the six directions (of its vision), namely the four cardinal directions, the zenith and the nadir; and each of these six is further analysed according to its ten subsidiary directions. When, among these, the sense-organ of the eye focusses on the vision of an easterly form in the eastern direction, there are four (sensory attributes which arise), namely, sound is heard, scent is sensed, taste is savoured, and objects are contacted. Each of the remaining nine subsidiary directions also has these four (sensory attributes), making forty in all. Similarly, each of the five remaining directions (in which the eye casts its vision), when analysed according to their ten respective subsidiary directions, also has forty such (sensory

attributes). Thus there are six divisions of forty, making two hundred and forty (sensory attributes associated with the sense-organ of the eye). And when the sensory attributes associated respectively with the sense-organs of the ear, nose, tongue and body are similarly estimated, they number twelve hundred. These are the extraordinary sensory attributes of the buddha-level.

While these male and female consorts, male and female spiritual warriors, male and female gatekeepers and so forth appear in the middle of the basic maṇḍala, they are surrounded by many hundreds of thousands of retinues. who form the respective maṇḍala clusters of the four enlightened families in the four directions.[1] The quantity and aspects of this array of deities forming the assembly (tshogs) in basic maṇḍalas such as this (de-lta-bu'i) is inexpressible (brjod-kyis mi-lang-ba), pervading the entire celestial expanse; and these appearances are naturally present without duality (gnyis-su med-par bzhugs-so). This is essentially because they arise from the disposition (of reality) through a unique display of self-manifesting pristine cognition.

[A Synopsis of Pristine Cognition's Self-Manifesting Array (94.4-97.6)]

The third part (of this chapter, see p. 336) is the synopsis of pristine cognition's self-manifesting array, which has two sections: the essence from which this array emerges and the manner of the array itself.

[The former (comments on Ch. 1.15):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the deities comprising these extensive maṇḍala-clusters (tshom-bu), see below, Ch. 9, PP. 797-801, Ch. 11, 935-944.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.15]

... Then this secret description of these secret maṇḍalas, in which a a the Tathāgatas and the assembled host of their queens are without duality, emerged from the indestructible Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities: [15] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang gnyis-su med-pa'i
gsang-ba'i dkyil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kyis gsang-ba 'di-nyid sku-dang gsung-
dang thugs-dang yon-tan 'phrin-las rdo-rje-las phyung-ngo / [15]

Commentary:

Once the introductory scene had been explained in detail, then (de-nas) this ('di) great secret description of these (de-dag-nyid-kyi gsang-ba) self-manifesting maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor), which are secret (gsang-ba'i) because their essence is not within the perceptual range of others, but is one in which the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) or male consorts and the assembled host of their queens (btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang) or female consorts are without duality (gnyis-su med-pa'i), emerged (phyung-ngo) inexpressibly and as a naturally arisen intention from the indestructible (rdo-rje las) buddha-body (sku-dang), the indestructible buddha-speech (gsung-dang), the indestructible buddha-mind (thugs-dang), the indestructible buddha-attributes (yon-tan-dang) and the indestructible buddha-activities (phrin-las). Thus there emerged these following secret words of indestructible reality which reveal the truth of the self-manifesting maṇḍala of the five enlightened families.

The latter, concerning the manner in which this emerges and the self-manifesting array itself, is threefold: the disposition through which this self-manifesting maṇḍala is arrayed, the manner in which it appears, and the recognition of the reality through which it is present.

[i. The first of these (comments on Ch. 1.16):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.16]

... E, Ema, Emaho! Holding sway over the very expanse of the real. The maṇḍala of pristine cognition has a disposition of spirituality. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

e e-ma e-ma-ho / de-bzhin-nyid-kyi dbyings-nyid dbang-sgyur ye-shes
dkyil-'khor thugs-rje'i ngang / [16]

Commentary:

Through the disposition of the buddha-body of reality, (symbolised by) the syllable E (e), there emerges the appearance of the buddha-body of perfect rapture, (symbolised by) the syllables Ema (ema) and the wondrous Teacher who diversely manifests in and of himself, (symbolised by) the syllables Emaho (e-ma-ho). Holding sway over (dbang-sgyur) the essence which is the Buddha-body of reality and the very expanse of the real (de-bzhin-nyid-kyi dbyings-nyid), the spontaneous maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor) of the buddha-body of perfect rapture along with its fivefold pristine cognition (ye-shes) emerges through or has the Teacher's own disposition

of (ngang) inconceivable spirituality (thugs-rje).

[ii. The second (the manner in which It appears, comments on Ch. 1.17):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.17]

... This self-manifesting nature, radiant in its images of contemplation and its pure magical display, [17] ...

[Tibetan]

rang-srang-ba-nyid ting-'dzin gzugs-brnyan sgyu-ma rnam-dag gsal-ba-ni / [17]

Commentary:

[The manner in which it appears]

This Buddha-field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, which is a nature (nyid) self-manifesting (rang-srang-ba) to the Tathāgata himself, is said to be radiant (gsal-ba-ni) and to appear essentially in the pure images of (gzugs-brnyan) the Buddhas' contemplation (ting-'dzin) and in the naturally pure (rnam-dag) magical display (sgyu-ma) of pristine cognition.

[iii. The third (the recognition of the reality through which it is present comments on Ch. 1.18):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.18]

... Is a wish-fulfilling gem or enlightened attribute of Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Where there is nothing to be dispelled. It itself is the abode of supreme indestructible reality. The inexhaustible wheel of adornment.—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

sku-gsung-thugs-dang yon-tan 'phrin-las sel-med-pa-yi yon-tan yid-bzhin rin-po-che / mi-zad-par ldan-pa rgyan-gyi 'khor-lo rdo-rje mchog-gi gnas-nyid-do /—zhes rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o / [18]

Commentary:

[The recognition of the reality through which it is present:]

This identity of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-gsung-thugs yon-tan phrin-las) where there is nothing to be dispelled (sel-med-pa-yi), not even the slightest defective blemish, is an inconceivably mighty wish-fulfilling gem (yid-bzhin rin-po-che) or excellent enlightened attribute (yon-tan). It itself is (nyid-do) the essence of supreme indestructible reality (rdo-rje mchog-gi) without conjunction or disjunction, a nature endowed with pristine cognition's inexhaustible (mi-zad-par) wheel of adornment (rgyan-gyi 'khor-lo), and the abode (gnas) of the buddha-body of perfect rapture.—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality (zhes rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig) of buddha-body, speech, and mind which merged (tu'o) concerning the natural expression of tantra.

There are some who ascribe this last passage to the compiler, but Incorrectly so because it is also extant in (the actual text of) this Tantra of the secret Nucleus of Indestructible Reality (rdo-rje gsang-ba'i snying-po'i rgyud, NGB. Vol. 14).

The bla-ma Rong-zom Paṇḍita further asserts with respect to this section that it refers to the maṇḍala of the real (de-bzhin-nyid), the maṇḍala of the expanse (dbyings), the maṇḍala of skillful means which holds sway (dbang-bsgyur), the maṇḍala of pristine cognition (ye-shes), the maṇḍala of spirituality (thugs-rje), the maṇḍala of the self-manifesting (rang-srang-ba), the maṇḍala of nature (nyid), the maṇḍala of contemplation (ting-'dzin), the maṇḍala of images (gzugs-brnyan), the maṇḍala of magical display (sgyu-ma), the maṇḍala of the pure (rnam-dag), and the maṇḍala that is radiant (gsal-ba). Now, because these are words of indestructible reality they are applicable in all contexts. However, this is not an occasion for the maṇḍalas of the path including the maṇḍalas of the three kinds of contemplation and of images to be revealed. It is rather an occasion for the self-manifesting and spontaneous maṇḍala of the buddhas to be revealed. Therefore (his explanation) is irrelevant.[1]

There are also some who hold the introductory scene to be a (later) compilation. but they have not examined even a fraction of the text. Concerns the compilation of the introductory scene among the transmitted precepts of the Teacher, there are some who incorrectly claim that the introductory scene is the word of the compiler and that therefore the actual transmitted precepts commence from the beginning of the discourse onwards. However the words of this (introductory scene) are indeed transmitted precepts because (in this context) there is no difference between the compiler and the teacher. Furthermore, in the Tantra Which

Purifies All Evil Destinies (T. 483) the maṇḍala is mostly described by the Lord of Secrets (Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi) and yet it too lies within the tantra-text.[2]

This (present work) also conforms doctrinally with the Sūtra of Compassion's White Lotus (T. 112) which says:

When I have passed into nirvāṇa, o monks!, if the transmitted precepts are compiled, let the discourse begin with the words Thus have I heard on a certain occasion.[3]

[The conclusion comments on Ch. 1.19:]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Again kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa emphasises the Atiyoga interpretation, rejecting structures associated with the path in this context of the self-manifesting ground.

[2]:

See T. Skorupski, The Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra. Ch. 2, PP. 35ff.

[3]:

The precise format of the Introductory words expressed in this tantra-text of course has important differences, as has already been explained, pp. 336-349.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 1.19]

... This completes the first chapter from the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the Introductory Scene. [19]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las gleng-gzhi'i le'u-ste dang-po'o / [19]

Commentary:

[The conclusion]:

These descriptions of the (five) kinds of excellence form the content of the Introductory Scene (gleng-gzhi) from the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real (gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) in Twenty-Two Chapters. The Introductory Scene is so-called because it forms the background narrative, provides authentication and establishes the basis for the tantra which will unfold. The word chapter (le'u) is derived from (the Sanskrit) pariccheda and conveys the sense of “segmented” or “fragmented”, which is what is also implied in this context. This is the first (dang-po) in that it is described as the initial chapter, positioned at the beginning of a series. Sections indicating the number of lines (in a text = bam-po) are estimated from the beginning downwards and chapter numbers are estimated from the end upwards. therefore, this (usage of a number) as the final word indicates that it completes (-'o) each of the different chapters.

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[Full title: Generation of Ultimate and Relative Enlightened Mind as Pristine Cognition]

Then the Transcendent Lord Samantabhadra, who is the active male subject and the indestructible intelligence penetrated the queen or passive female object Samantabhadri, she who is positive with respect to all phenomena, with his indestructible reality, which is the natural posture of all (buddhas) without exception. Through this penetration, all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times without exception became indivisible in the nature of the unique one. So it was that the Tathāgata

himself uttered this meaningful expression to and for the Tathāgata himself. [1]

Emaho!

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality

Are known as the five perfect buddhas.

All the manifold activity fields and sensory bases

Are the nature of the maṇḍala of bodhisattvas.

Earth and water are Buddhālocanā and Māmakī.

Fire and air are Pāṇḍaravāsīnī and Samayatārā.

Space is Dhātviśvarī.

The three realms of existence are primordial Buddha-fields.

All things that there are without exception

Are not extraneous to the buddhas themselves.

Phenomena extraneous to the buddhas themselves

Have not been found by the buddhas themselves.

—When he said this, all the Tathāgatas rejoiced. [2]

Then the queen Samantabhadrī who is the passive female object, positive with respect to all phenomena, became indivisible with the Transcendent Lord Samantabhadra, who is positive with respect to all minds, and uttered this meaningful expression. [3]

O! The chiliocosms of the ten directions are primordially void.

The three levels of existence are pure fields.

The five degenerations are themselves the blissful abode.

The five components themselves are perfect buddhas.

Apart from the supreme nucleus of all (things),

The conquerors do not seek the doctrine elsewhere.

Doctrines said to be other than that

Though sought, have not been found by the conquerors.

—When she said this, the Tathāgatas themselves knew all things to be primordial buddha-hood. [4]

Then their non-dual Great Identity spoke as follows, generating the mind through which primordial buddha-hood is attained as pristine cognition. [5]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvelous reality

Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.

All is created through the uncreated.

At creation itself there is no creation. [6]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality

Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.

All ceases through the unceasing.

At cessation itself, there is no cessation. [7]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality

Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.

All abides through the non-abiding.

At abiding Itself, there is no abiding. [8]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.
All is referential through the non-referential.
At reference Itself, there is no reference. [9]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect buddhas.
Phenomena come and go through an absence of coming and going.
At coming and going itself, there is no coming or going. [10]

—When they said this, all the Tathāgatas and all the assembled host of their queens too were filled with joy. [11]

Then all the Tathāgatas with [all] the assembled hosts of their queens uttered this meaningful expression. [12]

Emaho! This primordially secret reality
Appears as diversity but is naturally secret.
It is essentially very secret—
Not extraneous, but most secret.

—In accordance with these words, [13] all the Tathāgatas and all things are Indivisible because they are of one characteristic in the essential nature of primordial buddha-hood. However, the conceptual thoughts of living beings have ripened through ignorance into the inconceivable five classes of living beings. Generating great spirituality, or the great pristine cognition of the buddhas for their sake, they uttered this meaningful expression. [14]

Emaho! From the nucleus of the Sugata
Individual conceptual thoughts are emanated by deeds.
There are diverse corporeal forms, raptures.
Abodes, sufferings and so forth—
The possessor and the possessed are differentiated. [15]
[But] not bound by any agent, bondage is non-existent.
There is not an object to be bound.
By egotistical conceptual thoughts
Knots in the sky are urgently tied and untied. [16]

In order to reveal this reality of the buddhas
Which is primordial, spontaneous and perfect.
And where there is neither bondage nor liberation.
Diverse emanations are made.

Through these words, the Tathāgata himself purposefully conversed with the Tathāgata himself. [17] This completes the second chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the generation of ultimate and relative enlightened mind as pristine cognition. [18]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.1]

Then the Transcendent Lord Samantabhadra, who is the active male subject and the indestructible intelligence penetrated the queen or passive female object Samantabhadri, she who is positive with respect to all phenomena, with his indestructible reality, which is the natural posture of all (buddhas) without exception. Through this penetration, all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times without exception became indivisible in the nature of the unique one. So it was that the Tathāgata himself uttered this meaningful expression to and for the Tathāgata himself. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das byed-pa-po rdo-rje yid kun-tu bzang-po / thams-cad ma-lus-pa'i rang-bzhin-gyi tshul rdo-rjes / btsun-mo bya-ba-mo chos kun-tu bzang-mo-la 'jug-par gyur-to / zhugs-pas phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa ma-lus-pa thams-cad gcig-gi rang-bzhin-du dbyer-med-pas de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid / de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

The second aspect (of the natural maṇḍala of the ground, see p. 331) discloses how all things are meaningfully expressed as primordial buddhahood and how spirituality is aroused because there is no duality between the Teacher (Samantabhadra) himself and the naturally present pristine cognition of buddha-mind which arises as the five enlightened families. This is revealed in the manner of a discourse.

Now, the Teacher, the male and female consort (Samantabhadra) who is the buddha-body of reality, ascertains as a knowable object the naturally present pristine cognition of buddha-mind which appears as the buddha-body of perfect rapture. At that time, the awareness or subject which makes this ascertainment is described as the male consort Samantabhadra who is the indestructible reality of mind, and the object that is known is named the female consort Samantabhadri, she who is the passive female object. This accords with the explanation given below in chapters (11-12) on the attainment of the feast-offerings that the object is the female consort and the subject the male consort.[1] The non-duality of the male and female consorts, when considered intellectually, refers to the unity of these two in the essence of awareness. It is as if, for example, when a mental image of Lhasa is perceived, the mind were the male consort (or subject). Lhasa were the female consort (or object), and the single savour of these two in one's own mind were non-duality.

Once this overview has been understood, there follows the Interlinear commentary on Chapter Two. It has two parts—respectively revealing the

genuine Intention of the discourse and the arousal of spirituality for the sake of sentient beings who have not realised it.

[Genuine Intention of the Discourse (98.5-106.4)]

The former is threefold, comprising the intention of the male consort, that of the female consort, and that of their non-duality, which respectively give rise to the discourse.

[i. Intention of the Male Consort Which Gives Rise to the Discourse (98.5-101.5):]

This includes both the cause which induces his Intention to initiate the discourse and the actual discourse.

[The former (comments on Ch. 2.1):]

Once the Introductory scene had been revealed, then the Transcendent Lord (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das) Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang-po), the active male subject (byed-pa-po) who objectively analyses the naturally present pristine cognition or buddha-mind of the central deity of the enlightened family, and is the indestructible intelligence (rdo-rje yid) non-dual in nature because he penetrates many objects without straying from the essential expanse. Intellectually penetrated ('jug-par gyur-to) the queen (btsun-mo) or passive female object (bya-ba-mo) Samantabhadri—she in whom the nature of objects is established as primordial buddhahood and who is positive (bzang-mo) because with respect to all (kun-tu) phenomena (chos) of apparent existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa without exception, everything is indeed primordial buddhahood. This he did with his indestructible reality (rdo-rjes), unchanging throughout the three times, which is the posture (tshul) of the three natural (rang-bzhin-gyi) buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction, gathering the Intentions of all (thams-cad) the buddhas of the ten directions and four times without exception (ma-lus-pa'i).[2] Through this (-pas) intellectual penetration (zhugs), all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times without exception (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa ma-lus-pa thams-cad) became essentially indivisible (dbyer-med) in the nature of the unique one (gcig-gi rang-bzhin-du) Samantabhadra, the naturally present pristine cognition of buddha-mind. So it was that (-pas), without perceiving phenomena extraneous to his own nature, the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid) uttered (brjod-do) this ('di) following meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa) to and for the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la).

[The latter (his actual discourse, comments on Ch. 2.2):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See Ch. 11, pp. 897-898; Ch. 12, pp. 95" ff.

[2]:

As explained in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*. Ch. 2, pp. 98-104, this refers to the conferral of the secret empowerment (*gsang-dbang*). On this empowerment, see below. Ch. 9, pp. 801-804, Ch. 10, pp. 870-871; and on empowerment in general. Ch. 9, pp. 786-804 and Ch. 10, *passim*.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.2]

Emaho!

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality

Are known as the five perfect Buddhas.

All the manifold activity fields and sensory bases

Are the nature of the maṇḍala of Bodhisattvas.

Earth and water are Buddhhalocanā and Māmakī.

Fire and air are Pāṇḍaravāsini and Samayatārā.

Space is Dhātviśvarī.

The three realms of existence are primordial Buddha-fields.

All things that there are without exception

Are not extraneous to the Buddhas themselves.

Phenomena extraneous to the Buddhas themselves

Have not been found by the Buddhas themselves.

—When he said this, all the Tathāgatas rejoiced. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho / rdo-rje phung-po yan-lag-ni / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas lnga-ru
grags / skye-mched khams-rnams mang-po kun / byang-chub sems-dpa'i
dkyil-'khor-nyid / sa-chu spyang-dang ma-ma-ki / me-rlung gos-dkar sgröl-
ma-ste / nam-mkha' dbyings-kyi dbang-phyug-ma / srid-gsum ye-nas
sangs-rgyas-zhing / thams-cad ma-lus chos-so-cog / sangs-rgyas-nyid-las
gzhan ma-yin / sangs-rgyas-nyid-las gzhan-pa'i chos / sangs-rgyas-nyid-
kyis mi-brnyes-so / —zhes brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad
mnyes-par gyur-to [2]

Commentary:

[His actual discourse]

Emaho! (e-ma-ho) signifies great wonder because all things are originally pure. Accordingly, the term “indestructible reality” (rdo-rje) refers to the nature of all buddhas and sentient beings which is the primordial uncreated buddhahood; and the component of (phung-po) which it is comprised refers to the nature of reality or emptiness and apparitional reality or appearance. Its aspects (yan-lag-ni) are the five components including consciousness, which (in reality) are known (grags)

as the five (Inga-ru) genuinely perfect buddhas (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas) beginning with Akṣobhya. Similarly, all the manifold (mang-po kun) details of the twelve activity fields (skye-mched) and the eighteen sensory bases (khams-rnams) abide primordially as the nature of the maṇḍala (dkyil-khor-nyid) of the retinue of bodhisattvas (byang-chub sems-dpa'i) who are male and female consorts.

The activity fields are so-called because they cause the six objects such as form and the six consciousnesses of the senseorgans such as the eye "to arise" (skye). while causing the continuity (of their perception) "to be sensed" (mched) in the subsequent instant.[1] When classified, they comprise the six objective modes, namely those of form, sound, smell, taste, contact, and phenomena; and the six sense-organs (i.e. subjective modes), namely those of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and Intellect; twelve activity fields in all. The eighteen sensory bases are the six objects such as form, the six sense-organs such as the eye, and the six consciousnesses of the sense-organs such as the consciousness of the eye.

The five elements are also buddhas in the essence of the five female consorts. Earth and water (sa-chu) are respectively Buddhālocanā and Māmāki (spyan-dang ma-ma-ki). Fire and air (me-rlung) are respectively Pāṇḍaravāsini and Samayatārā (gos-dkar sgrol-ma ste); and space is Dhātviśvarī (nam-mkha' dbyings-kyi dbang-phyug-ma).

In the same way, the essence of the three realms of existence (grid-gsum), namely those of desire, form and formlessness which are subsumed respectively within the outer elements, the Inner elements, and the accumulation of ideas, is ostensibly impure, but it too abides in the nature of primordial (ye-nas) or original buddha-fields (sangs-rgyas zhing). All things (thams-cad) of saṃsāra and the realities of nirvāṇa without exception (ma-lus), i.e. all things of apparitional existence that there are (chos-so-cog) are not extraneous to the buddhas themselves (sangs-rgyas-nyid-las gzhan-ma-yin). The so-called phenomena (chos) of impure saṃsāra, extraneous to the buddhas themselves (sangs-rgyas-nyid las gzhan-pa'i), which have independent characteristics, when searched for, have not been found (mi-brnyes-so) by the buddhas themselves (sangs-rgyas-nyid-kyis), even to the extent of an atomic particle. They are not found; and there is understood to be actually nothing which the buddhas do not find.

It says in the Ascertainment of Valid Cognition (T. 4211):

The omniscient one is exclusively understood to be without erroneous perception in all respects.

Similarly, it says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

The disposition of the All-Accomplishing One,
Where all things are uncreated.
Is the nucleus of primordial buddhahood.
The All-accomplishing One does not refer objectively
To a presence or absence.
His disposition of natural sameness

Is the original ground or baseless reality.

And in the Sūtra of the Irreversible Wheel (t. 240):

All things have attained primordial Buddha-hood.
Therefore enlightenment is the characteristic nature of space.

In this way, the reality which appears is primordial Buddha-hood.

When he said this (zhes brjod-pas), all (thams-cad) the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) along with the assembled host of their queens rejoiced (mnyed-par gyur-to).

[ii. Intention of the Female Consort Which Gives Rise to the Discourse (101.5-103.6):]

The second (see p. 442), the intention of the female consort which gives rise to a discourse principally on the abiding nature of reality or emptiness, also has two sections, namely, the cause which induces her intention to initiate the discourse and the actual discourse.

[The former (comments on Ch. 2.3):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the activity-fields and sensory bases, see above. Ch. 1, note 99; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp 4bff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.3]

... Then the queen Samantabhadri who is the passive female object, positive with respect to all phenomena, became indivisible with the Transcendent Lord Samantabhadra, who is positive with respect to all minds, and uttered this meaningful expression. [3] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas btsun-mo bya-ba-mo chos kun-tu bzang-mos / bcom-ldan-'das yid [byed-pa-po] kun-tu bzang-po-dang gnyis-su med-par gyur-nas / ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [3]

Commentary:

Once the objective abiding nature had been intellectually expressed (by

Samantabhadra), then (de-nas) the queen (btsun-mo). or naturally pure object who appears to his intellect, the passive female object (bya-ba-mo) that is ascertained, Samantabhadri, positive with respect to all (kun-tu bzang-mo) selfmanifesting phenomena (chos), became indivisible (gnyis-su med-par gyur) in terms of the subject-object dichotomy from the Transcendent Lord Samantabhadra who is positive with respect to all minds (bcom-ldan-'das yid kun-tu bzang-po-dang) and who is the subjective pristine cognition or awareness. And then (nas) she uttered (brjod-do) this ('di) following statement as the essence of her meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa) concerning this abiding nature of reality or emptiness.

[The latter, comments on Ch. 2.4):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.4]

O! The chiliocosms of the ten directions are primordially void.

The three levels of existence are pure fields.

The five degenerations are themselves the blissful abode.

The five components themselves are perfect Buddhas.

Apart from the supreme nucleus of all (things),

The conquerors do not seek the doctrine elsewhere.

Doctrines said to be other than that

Though sought, have not been found by the conquerors.

—When she said this, the Tathāgatas themselves knew all things to be primordial Buddha-hood. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

kye-ma'o / phyogs-bcu stong-khams ye-nas dben / srid-pa gsum-ni dag-pa'i zhing / snyigs-ma lnga-nyid bde-ldan gnas / phung-po lnga-nyid rdzogs sangs-rgyas / thams-cad mchog-gi snying-po-bas / gzhan-du rgyal-bas chos-mi-btsal / nyid-las gzhan zhes-bya-ba'i chos / btsal-kyang rgyal-bas mi-brnyes do / —zhes brjod-pas thams-cad ye-nas sangs-rgyas-par de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-kyis mkhyen to / [4]

Commentary:

O! (kye-ma-ho) is exclaimed to signify the wonder of reality. It is wondrous in the sense that, illustrated by this selfmanifesting world-system, all the great trichiliocosms (stong-khams) of the ten directions (chyogs-bcu) are revealed to be primordially (ye-nas) and originally empty and therefore void (dben). This means that the physical containing world is emptiness.

Concerning the trichiliocosm: The world-system of the four continents consists of a single series of four continents with Mount Sumeru. It is surrounded by an iron mountain range equal in height to Mt. Yugadhara, and it is adorned with the divine mansions of the desire and form realms. The first chiliocosm (stong dang-po'i spyi-phud-kyi' 'jig-rten) delimits one thousand of these world-systems, and is surrounded by an iron mountain range equal in height to the abode of Trayatrimśa. The dichliocosm (stong gnyis-pa bar-ma'i 'jig-rten) delimits one thousand of those, and is surrounded by an iron mountain range equal in height to the abode of the Parinirmittavaśavartins; and the great trichiliocosm (stong-gsum-gyi stong chen-po 'jig-rten-gyi khams) delimits one thousand of the latter, and is surrounded by an iron mountain range equal in height to the abode of the first meditative concentration. in this context, all the fields and world-systems, Illustrated by this one, are emptiness, and similar to a reflected image.[1]

All sentient beings who are the animate contents of these (worldsystems) are also revealed to be emptiness. For, their three levels of existence (srid-gsum-ni) abide in the nature of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, the fields (zhing) of the primordially pure (dag-pa'i) buddhas.[2]

In addition, the five degenerations (snyigs-ma lnga) are themselves (nyid) nothing but the essence, the naturally present pristine cognition or the supremely blissful abode (bde-ldan gnas). This is because the energy of the five pristine cognitions appears as the five poisons and generates the suffering of saṃsāra when (beings) are bewildered in the subject-object dichotomy. There are some who have mistakenly taught that this passage refers to the degeneration of time and so forth (and not to the five poisons).[3]

The five components (phung-po lnga) of living beings themselves are (nyid) the primordially and manifestly [perfect] buddhas (rdzogs sangs-rgyas), as has indeed been mentioned above. Therefore, the supreme nucleus (mchog-gi snying-po) is the nature of enlightenment or sameness, the abiding nature of all (thams-cad) phenomena which is neither positive nor negative, and without acceptance or rejection in all respects. Apart from (-bas) this, the conquerors do not seek the doctrine elsewhere (gzhan-du rgyal-bas chos ml-btsal). Everything is the natural expression of the buddhas, and any erroneous doctrines said to be (zhes-bya-ba'i chos) impure or other than that (nyid-las gzhan) buddhahood, thought sought, have not been found by the conquerors (btsal-kyang rgyal-bas mi-brnyes-so) elsewhere. They are not found.

When the female consort (Samantabhadri) said this (zhes brjod-pas), the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) themselves (nyid) along with the assembled host of their queens knew (mkhyen-no) all (thams-cad) things to be primordial buddhahood (ye-nas sangs-rgyas-par).

[iii. The Non-Dual Intention Which Gives Rise to the Discourse (103-6-106.4):]

The third (see p. 442) concerning their non-dual Intention, includes both the cause which Induces their Intention to initiate the discourse and

the actual discourse.

[The former (comments on Ch. 2.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the underlying emptiness of this cosmological structure, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b and chart.

[2]:

These three levels or spheres of existence (srid-gsum) are the nether world of Nāgas (sa-'og klu'i srid-na), the surface world of humans (sa'i steng mi'i srid-pa), and the upper world of gods (gnam-steng lha'i srid-ca).

[3]:

The author holds the five degenerations or impurities to refer to the five poisons (pañcakleśa) of rāga, dveśa, moha, māna and irṣa, rather than the pañcakaṣāya (snyigs-ma lnga) or impurities of life, view, conflicting emotion, sentient beings and time (Mahāvvyutpatti 2335-2340).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.5]

... Then their non-dual Great Identity spoke as follows, generating the mind through which primordial Buddha-hood is attained as pristine cognition. [5] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas gnyis-su med-pa'i bdag-nyid chen-pos ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa'i
sems ye-shes-su bskyed-pa 'di gsungs-so / [5]

Commentary:

Once the objective reality had been purified in the essence of the subject, or pristine cognition that is awareness, then (de-nas) the non-dual Great Identity (gnyis-su med-pa'i bdag-nyid chen-pos) of the male consort or awareness and the female consort or emptiness spoke as follows ('di gsungs-so) concerning the mind (sems) which is indeed understood to be the reality of buddhahood, existing primordially as (su) naturally present pristine cognition (ye-shes), and thereby generating (bskyed-pa) it in beings who already possess it. This is because saṃsāra and nirvāṇa attain buddhahood (sangs-rgyas-pa'i) in primordial (ye-nas) sameness.

Accordingly it says in the Tantra of the Marvellous King (rmad-byung rgyal-po'i rgyud. NGB. Vol. 2):

Oneself and the limitless sentient beings
Are primordial buddhas.
May mind be cultivated as supreme enlightenment
In beings who know that this is so.

[The latter, (the discourse that they initiate, comments on Ch. 2.6-11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.6-11]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvelous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect Buddhas.
All is created through the uncreated.
At creation itself there is no creation. [6]
Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect Buddhas.
All ceases through the unceasing.
At cessation itself, there is no cessation. [7]
Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect Buddhas.
All abides through the non-abiding.
At abiding Itself, there is no abiding. [8]
Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect Buddhas.
All is referential through the non-referential.
At reference Itself, there is no reference. [9]
Emaho! This wondrous, marvellous reality
Is the secret of all the perfect Buddhas.

Phenomena come and go through an absence of coming and going.

At coming and going itself, there is no coming or going. [10]

—When they said this, all the Tathāgatas and all the assembled host of their queens too were filled with joy. [11] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi
gsang / skye-ba med-las thams-cad skye / skyes-pa-nyid-na skye-ba-med /
[6] e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi
gsang / 'gag-pa med-las thams-cad 'gag / 'gag-pa-nyid-na 'gag-pa-med / [7]
e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi gsang
/ gnas-pa med-las thams-cad gnas / gnas-pa-nyid-na gnas-pa-med / [8] e-
ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi gsang /

dmigs-pa med-las thams-cad dmigs / dmigs-pa-nyid-na dmigs-pa-med / [9]
e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos / rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi gsang
/ 'gro-'ong med-las 'gro-dang 'ong / 'gro-'ong-nyid-na 'gro-'ong-med / [10]
—ces brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-dang / btsun-mo'i tshogs
thams-cad-kyang mnyes-pas khyab-par gyur-to / [11]

Commentary:

[The discourse that they initiate]

Emaho! (e-ma-ho) is exclaimed because all things are primordially beyond creation, cessation, and objects of conceptual elaboration; and the intellect which realises this is Indeed revealed as the nature of the five pristine cognitions.[1] This reality (chos) which is the wondrous (ngomtshar) abiding nature of all things, more marvellous (rmad-kyi) than others, is the meaning of the profound secret (gsang) of all the perfect buddhas (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi). If you ask what is (this secret), it is that through (las) the disposition of the uncreated (skye-ba med-pa) original reality, all (thams-cad) things subsumed within appearance and emptiness, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, appear to be created (skyes) as in a dream or magical display. But at (na) the moment when their creation (skyes-pa) itself (nyid) appears, actually there is no creation (skye-pa med). This is the essence or expanse of reality, and the Intellect which realises it is the pristine cognition of reality's expanse.

The first two lines (of this stanza) are similarly combined with the four succeeding stanzas in the following manner: Through (las) the primordially unceasing ('gag-pa med-pa) reality in which diverse glows are reflected as on the surface of a mirror, all (thams-cad) that appears like reflected Images in the diverse apparitional reality ostensibly ceases ('gag). But at (na) the moment when their cessation Itself ('gag-pa-nyid) appears, there is no cessation ('gag-pa med). This is the mirror-like abiding nature, and the intellect which realises this is the mirror-like pristine cognition.

Through the (las) sky-like disposition in which all things are primordially non-abiding (gnas-pa med), all (thams-cad) the diverse things which appear in that manner do ostensibly abide (gnas). But at (na) the moment when abiding itself (gnas-nyid) appears, actually there is no abiding (gnas-pa med-pa). This is sameness; and the intellect which realises it is the pristine cognition of sameness.

Through the (las) disposition similar to the midst of space or a clear ocean, in which naturally pure mind-as-such is non-referential (dmigs-pa med-pa) and signless, all (thams-cad) that arises as diverse thoughts in the manner of clouds or reflected images la ostensibly referential (dmigs) in terms of refutation, proof and so forth. But at (na) the moment of reference itself (dmigs-pa-nyid), in terms of diverse thoughts, it is groundless and baseless; and in fact there is no reference (dmigs-pa med). This is the natural state, devoid of thoughts which apprehend signs, and a particular discernment. The Intellect which realises it is called the pristine cognition of particular discernment.

Through (las) an emanation-like disposition where there is originally an

absence of coming and going ('gro-'ong med) with respect to all things. phenomena of appearance and awareness diversely appear to come and go ('gro-dang 'ong). But at (na) the moment when coming and going itself ('gro-'ong-nyid) appears, there is the intrinsic essence which abides and there is no coming or going ('gro-'ong med). This is the accomplishment of activity; and the Intellect which realises it is the pristine cognition of accomplishment.

There are some who claim that the meaning of these (stanzas) is connected with the pristine cognition of the four delights, but there is evidently no occasion to make this connection. This is a situation in which (not delight but) the abiding nature of all apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is revealed.[2]

When they said this (-ces brjod-pas) concerning the primordially pure nature of all things, all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad) who are male consorts (symbolising) appearance and all the assembled host of their queens (dang btsun-mo'i tshogs thams-cad) who are female consorts (symbolising) emptiness too (kyang) were filled with joy (mnyes-pas khyab-par gyur-to), primordially in sameness.

[How Spirituality is Aroused For The Sake Of Sentient Beings Who Have Not Realised This Reality (106.4-111.4)]

The second (see p. 442) concerns the manner in which spirituality is aroused for the sake of living beings who have not realised this reality. It has four sections, namely: a teaching on the object for which spirituality is induced—i.e. sentient beings' lack of realisation; the bewilderment in saṃsāra which occurs through the egotistical apprehension of that unrealised nature; the truth devoid of bondage and liberation which is not bypassed from the very moment when this bewilderment appears; and a description of the diffusion of spirituality's display in order that this reality might be revealed.

[i. The object for which spirituality is induced, i.e. sentient beings' lack of realisation (106.6-107.5):]

The first comprises both a teaching on the cause which Induces spirituality and a teaching on the object for which it is thereby Induced. The former (comments on Ch. 2.12):

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The following five stanzas indicate how the five pristine cognitions perceive their respective atemporal or primordial objects, viz. the atemporal nature of creation is perceived by the dharmadhātujñāna, the atemporal nature of cessation is perceived by the ādarśajñāna, the atemporal nature of abiding; is perceived by the samatājñāna, the atemporal nature of referential objects is perceived by the pratyavekṣanajñāna, and the atemporal nature of motion is perceived by

the kṛtyupasthānājñāna, On these stanzas, see also H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery. pp. 29ff.

[2]:

These stanzas have been related to the five aspects of “seminal enlightened mind” (sems-linga), on which see above, p. 46, note 97, and Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, pp. 106-109. The exegesis of the latter seeks to explain the five stanzas in terms of both the path of liberation (grol-lam) and the path of skillful means (thabs-lam) and it is in the context of the latter that the four delights are introduced. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa however, following the Atiyoga Interpretation, maintains that this is not a structure related to the path but to the self-manifesting ground.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.12]

... Then all the Tathāgatas with [all] the assembled hosts of their queens uttered this meaningful expression. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad btsun-mo'i tshogs [thams-cad]-
dang bcas-pas ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [12]

Commentary:

[The first comprises both a teaching on the cause which Induces spirituality and a teaching on the object for which it is thereby Induced. The former:]

Once the abiding nature of all things had been revealed, then all the Tathāgatas (de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-dang) with (dang-bcas-pas) [all (thams-cad)] the assembled hosts of their queens (btsun-mo'i tshogs) uttered this meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do) in order to reveal that very truth.

[The latter (comments on Ch. 2.13):]

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Emaho! This primordially secret reality
Appears as diversity but is naturally secret.
It is essentially very secret—
Not extraneous, but most secret.
—In accordance with these words, [13] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho ye-nas gsang-ba'i chos / sna-tshogs snang-la rang-bzhin gsang
/ ngo-bo-nyid-kyis rab-tu gsang / gzhan-du min-las shin-tu gsang / —zhes
brjod-pas / [13]

Commentary:

Emaho! (e-ma-ho) is exclaimed in distress at the host of sentient beings who have not realised this (reality). As long as the nature of all things is not realised from the very beginning to be the truth in which Buddha-hood is originally attained, this is a primordially (ye-nas) secret reality (gsang-ba'i chos) for all living beings. It appears as (snang) the diversity (sna-tshogs) of phenomenal existence, and these (appearances) primordially abide in the reality of the three buddha-bodies, without conjunction or disjunction. But (la) it is naturally secret (rang-bzhin gsang) because it is perceived as Impure bewildering phenomena. This nature of things, unrecognised as the reality where appearance and emptiness are without conjunction or disjunction, is essentially very secret (ngo-bo-nyid-kyis rab-tu gsang), unlike (lesser truths) which are extraneously hidden. This reality is not extraneous (gzhan-du min) to one's own mind, but (las) most secret (shin-tu gsang) because it is not seen to be present in oneself.

There are some who hold that (this reality) is kept secret from an unworthy recipient, but (their view) is Inappropriate because the present context is one in which the secret nature of the ground (and not of the path) is revealed.[1]

In accordance with these words (-zhes brjod-pas) concerning the primordially secret truth, the spirituality which reveals it is repeatedly generated.

[ii. Bewilderment in saṃsāra which occurs through egotistical apprehension of that unrealised nature (107.5-109.6):]

The second section concerning the nature of bewilderment comprises both a teaching on the cause of spirituality, and the actual nature of bewilderment.

[The former (comments on Ch. 2.14):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Again the author rejects the view that would include interpretations associated with the continuum of the path rather than the ground. The former view that the reality should be kept secret from unworthy recipients is also expressed below in the context of the path, e.g.. Ch. 10, section 6, and Ch. 13, section 22.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.14]

... [—In accordance with these words,] all the Tathāgatas and all things are indivisible because they are of one characteristic in the essential nature of primordial Buddha-hood. However, the conceptual thoughts of living beings have ripened through ignorance into the inconceivable five classes of living beings. Generating great spirituality, or the great pristine cognition of the Buddhas for their sake, they uttered this meaningful expression. [14] ...

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-dang / chos-thams-cad ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa'i ngo-bo-nyid-du gcig-pa'i mtshan-nyid yin-pas dbyer-med-na / 'gro-ba'i rnam-par rtog-pa ma-rig-pa-las 'gro-ba lnga'i ris bsam-gyis mi-khyab-par smin-pa-la / thugs-rje chen-po sangs-rgyas-kyi ye-shes chen-po skyes-nas / ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [14]

Commentary:

All (thams-cad) that appears as the body of reality of the pure tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) along with their fields and (dang) all (thams-cad) things (chos) of Impure saṃsāra which appear within the three levels of existence, i.e. the (inanimate) containing worlds and their (sentient) contents, are indivisible because they are of one characteristic in the essential nature of primordial Buddha-hood (ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa'i ngo-bo-nyid-du gcig-pa'i mtshan-nyid yin-pas dbyer-med), in this way they are pure. However (na'ang), the conceptual thoughts of living beings ('gro-ba'i rnam-par rtog-pa) have ripened (smin-na) into the inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-par) happiness and suffering experienced by the five classes of living beings ('gro-ba lnga'i ris), namely those of the three evil existences along with the gods and human beings.[1] These are the results which arise through (las) the dualistic ignorance (ma-rig-pa) of the bewildering subject-object dichotomy. Generating (skyes-nas) great (chen-po) naturally present spirituality (thugs-rje) or the great (chen-po) spontaneous pristine cognition of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas-kyi ye-shes) for their sake (la), once again they uttered this meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa 'di) which follows.

[The latter (comments on Ch. 2.15):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

in this enumeration of only five classes, the antigods (lha-ma-yin, Sanskrit asura) are subsumed with the Gods (lha, Sanskrit deva). See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, chart.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.15]

Emaho! From the nucleus of the Sugata
Individual conceptual thoughts are emanated by deeds.
There are diverse corporeal forms, raptures.
Abodes, sufferings and so forth—
The possessor and the possessed are differentiated. [15] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho bde-gshegs snying-po-las / rang-gi rnam-rtog las-kyis sprul /
sna-tshogs lus-dang longs-spyod-dang / gnas-dang sdug-bsngal la-sogs-pa /
bdag-dang bdag-gir so-sor 'dzin / [15]

Commentary:

Emaho! (e-ma-ho) is exclaimed out of loving kindness. Bewilderment, then, has emerged from (las) the disposition of the nucleus of the sugata (bde-gshegs snying-po), the original abiding nature or inwardly radiant mind-as-such. The nucleus of the Sugata is that which abides as the essence of inwardly radiant mind-as-such, the three buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction.

It says in the Sūtra the King of Contemplation (T. 127):

Pure, clear. Inwardly radiant,
Undisturbed and uncompounded
Is the nucleus of the Sugata,
The reality which primordially abides.

In the Extensive Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) too, it is referred to as the ground of all that is uncompounded and genuine:

It is not the ground of all conceptual thoughts.
But the genuine ground, without independent existence.
This is called the expanse of reality.
It is the pristine cognition of the real nature.

And in the Sūtra of the Bounteous Array (T. 110):

The ground of all diverse levels
Is indeed the nucleus of the Sugata.
This nucleus was revealed by the Sugata
In the term "ground-of-all".

All living beings are pervaded by this same (nucleus), as is said in the
King Of Contemplation (T. 127):

Living beings are entirely pervaded
By the nucleus of the sugata.

And also in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

All sentient beings are always endowed
With the nucleus of the Buddha
Because the perfect Buddha-body is diffused.
Because they are Indivisible from just what is.
And because they belong to the Buddha-family.

When bewilderment occurs through any conditions, the conceptual thoughts (rnam-rtog) of individual (rang) sentient beings arise of their own accord. Thus, these great citadels of saṃsāra are emanated (sprul) in the manner of self-manifesting dreams by (kyis) causally effective deeds (las). There are corporeal forms (lus-dang) of diverse (sna-tshogs) living beings including the gods, the raptures (longs-spyod-dang) which they desire, their abodes (gnas-dang) including the celestial realms, their respective joys and sufferings (sdug-bsngal), and so forth (la-sogs-pa) which manifoldly appear. Living beings apprehend the concept "I" as a possessor (bdag) and (dang) concepts such as "my things" as the possessed (bdag-gir). These are differentiated (so-sor 'dzin) within the subject-object dichotomy, so that beings are never liberated from saṃsāra.

[iii The truth without bondage and liberation which is not bypassed from the moment when bewilderment appears (109.6-110.5):]

[The third teaches that there is neither bondage nor liberation from the very moment when bewilderment appears.—It comments on Ch. 2.16:]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.16]

[But] not bound by any agent, bondage is non-existent.
There is not an object to be bound.
By egotistical conceptual thoughts

Knots in the sky are urgently tied and untied. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

sus-kyang ma-bcings bcings-med-de / bcings-bar bya-ba yod-ma-yin /
rnam-rtog bdag-tu 'dzin-pa-yis / nan-gyis mkha'-la mdud-pa 'dor / [16]

Commentary:

[The third teaches that there is neither bondage nor liberation from the very moment when bewilderment appears.—It comments on Ch. 2.16:]

Despite such afflictions caused by the many kinds of happiness and suffering in saṃsāra, in the abiding nature, as in space, all living beings are not bound (ma-bcings) by any agent (sus-kyang) causing bondage. Even conflicting emotion which ostensibly appears as bondage (bcings) is actually non-existent (med-de) because there is not (yod-ma-yin) in fact a single living being or even the mind of a living being which is an object to be bound (bcings-bar bya-ba). If you ask, however, whence this ostensible bondage has emerged, bewilderment is fabricated, without actually occurring, by egotistical conceptual thoughts (rnam-rtog bdag-tu 'dzin-pa-yis) which suddenly arise. It is as if, for example, one has urgently (nan-gyis) or purposefully imagined a rope to appear in the sky (mkha'-la) before one, and then tied and untied ('dor) many knots (mdud-pa) in it. One's own mind-as-such is originally pure like the sky, but it appears as the bewilderment of saṃsāra because it has contrived many modes of refutation and proof, or of subject and object. Just as a knot in the sky also seems more veridical the longer this intellectual effort is not abandoned and yet nothing is actually tied. this bewildering appearance of saṃsāra is more veridical the longer one does not abandon one's attachment to the subject-object dichotomy, and yet it is actually not veridical at all.

[iv. The diffusion of spirituality's display in order that this reality might be revealed (110.5-111.2):]

Fourth, there is the diffusion of spirituality in order that this reality might be revealed. (It comments on Ch. 2, 17):

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.17]

In order to reveal this reality of the buddhas

Which is primordial, spontaneous and perfect.

And where there is neither bondage nor liberation.

Diverse emanations are made.

—Through these words, the Tathāgata himself purposefully conversed

with the Tathāgata himself. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

bcings-med rnam-par grol-med-pa'i / ye-nas lhun-rdzogs sangs-rgyas
chos / bstan-phyir spro-ba sna-tshogs mdzad / —ces de-bzhin gshegs-pa-
nyid de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la ched-du gleng-ngo / [17]

Commentary:

[Fourth, there is the diffusion of spirituality in order that this reality might be revealed. (It comments on Ch. 2.17):]

In order to reveal (bstan-phyir) to living beings this profound and secret reality (chos) of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas), the nature of which is spontaneous (lhun) and entirely perfect (rdzogs) in the great field of primordial (ye-nas) buddha-body and pristine cognition, and also the mind-as-such where there is neither bondage nor liberation (bcings-med rnam-par grol-med-pa'i) with respect to all things of phenomenal existence, or of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, diverse emanations are made (spro-ba sna-tshogs mdzad). These comprise an inconceivable display of skillful means and inestimable emanations of great spirituality.

[The conclusion comments on Ch. 2.18]:

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 2.18]

... This completes the second chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the generation of ultimate and relative enlightened mind as pristine cognition. [18]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las / don-dam-pa-dang /
kun-rdzob-kyi byang-chub-sems ye-shes-su bskyed-pa'i le'u-ste gnyis-pa'o /
[18]

Commentary:

[The conclusion]

With these words (-ces), the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyid) who is of self-manifesting purity purposefully conversed (ched-du gleng-ngo) with the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyis-la).[1] This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the second chapter (le'u ste gnyis-pa)

from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of all buddhas Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa), entitled (-i) the generation of (bskyed-pa) both the ultimate (don-dam-pa) (enlightened mind) of nirvāṇa which is pure and free from all conceptual elaboration and (dang) the relative enlightened mind (kun-rdzob-kyis byang-chub sems) of saṃsāra as (fill) the pristine cognition (ye-shes-su) of sameness because Buddha-hood has been attained from the beginning. These (respectively) reveal the indivisible abiding nature and the reason why naturally present spirituality emanates from the expanse for the sake of living beings who have not realised (that reality).[2]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This line indicates the self-manifesting nature of the maṇḍala in Ghanavyūha. According to Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. p. 115, it means that the co-emergent retinue was transformed into the Tathāgata on perfectly receiving the empowerment.

[2]:

The ultimate enlightened mind (paramārthabodhicitta) refers to the indivisibility of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri, while the relative enlightened mind (saṃvṛttibodhicitta) refers to the generation of spirituality for the sake of beings suffering in saṃsāra.

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Then the six eases, embodiments of awareness who are said to be the blessing of great spirituality that emerges from all the Tathāgatas, came forth from the indestructible body, speech and mind of the Tathāgatas.[1] Having come forth, each of these great sages or transcendent lords also acts on behalf of the five classes of living beings through four kinds of instruction in each great trichiliocosm of the infinite and limitless ten directions of the six worlds where, by the power of deeds, (beings) move, facing laterally, upwards or downwards.[2]

The sages who demonstrate birth, renunciation, austerity, buddhahood, the subjugation of Māra, the turning of the doctrinal wheel, the demonstration of great miracles, the passing into nirvāṇa, and so forth,[3] are endowed with the six great supernormal cognitive powers, namely, entire knowledge of the four times, entire knowledge of the continuum of the minds of all beings, entire perception of everything through the eye of miraculous ability, entire hearing through the ear of miraculous ability, performing acts of entire benefit through the provision of miraculous ability, and perfecting the conduct of Samantabhadra, entirely positive with respect to the uncorrupted.[4] They are endowed with the buddha-body inconceivable to all, the buddha-mind Inconceivable to all, the buddha-visage inconceivable to all, and the buddha-speech inconceivable to all. Countless inconceivable forms are manifested in the ten directions. [5]

All (these emanations) Indeed act as follows: By the power of their instruction, through the vehicle of Gods and humans, the vehicle of pious attendants, the vehicle of self-centred buddhas, the vehicle of bodhisattvas, and the unsurpassed vehicle,[6] they have taught, are teaching and will teach the eighty-four thousand doctrines as an antidote for the eighty-four thousand conflicting emotions, which are conceptual thoughts of Ignorance. [7]

As for all these (vehicles) too: They concern respectively the dichotomy of object and subject: the outer and inner dependent origination; [the realisation that] this apprehension is exaggerated from bewilderment; the productive nature of deeds and of the results of deeds; and the conclusion revealing that which is uncovered, will not be covered and cannot be covered by deeds or the results of deeds. [8]

Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression. [9]

The phenomena of mundane bewilderment, as many as they are,
Revolve in a duality of outer and inner dependent origination
Through the subject-object dichotomy of Ignorance and ideas,
And they produce disharmonious experiences of happiness and
suffering. [10]

Their nature Itself does not degenerate from reality—
Genuine reality, dualistic in an illusory manner.
Does not differentiate between possessor and possessed.
It is the pure expanse itself, the unique mode. [11]

Extraneous phenomena associated with possessor and possessed
Have neither subtlety nor profundity
Apart from mere erroneous thoughts themselves.
There is an interaction between the nature of
Erroneous thoughts and (the thoughts) themselves,
But there is no extraneous wavering. [12]

Despite the continuity of erroneous thoughts
In terms of cause and result.
They are the baseless and groundless expanse.
The indivisible time moments are the nature
Of the pure expanse itself, [13]

Transformations which occur in relation to it.
Thus, self, others and the continuity of thought.
According to the pure unsurpassed vehicle, are supreme attributes. [14]

Disillusioned with the four vehicles,
One abides in the result of the single vehicle. [15]
When well investigated by genuine realisation
Everything becomes present from that (disposition)
Where there is no independent existence. [16]

The buddhas do not pass Into (final) nirvāṇa.
Their doctrines also do not decline.
In order to instruct the ignorant
Through acts of maturation.
They emerge and then demonstrate
The passing into nirvāṇa. [17]

The Vinaya, Sūtras, Abhidharma,
Commitments, attainment, accomplishment.
And the tantras of buddha-body, speech and mind
Renowned throughout the ten directions
Emanate from the Secret Nucleus. [18]

This natural Secret Nucleus
Is definitively established as the source
Of all pltaḥas and all tantras. [19]

Phenomena are merely names which have been applied.
The teachers apply names and words

Corresponding to their meaning
And then give teaching.
But the names and words which are taught
Are without substantiality.

—So they said. [20]

Then this secret description of these non-dual maṇḍalas of the Tathāgata came forth from the Indestructible buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. [21]

O! The retributions which are the basis of existence
Have emanated from possessive thoughts.
With respect to the six classes:
Birth, cessation, bodies, raptures, abodes,
The cycle of bewilderment which is suffering,
And so forth, are nothing at all.
Other than the nature of erroneous thought. [22]

The buddha-mind of emptiness, selflessness,
Primordial knowledge and Intrinsic awareness
Overpowers it through recollection.
Without objective or subjective reference.
It Itself is accordingly none other than
The wondrous buddha-bodies, speech, attributes and fields.

—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged.
[23]

Through these words, the Tathāgata himself knew that the teachings spoken by countless emanations of the six sages and by all the Tathāgatas are also gathered in these (verses). This completes the third chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, which establishes all dharmas. [24]

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[Commentary (111.3-170.1):]

The third aspect (of the natural maṇḍala of the ground—see p. 331) concerns the establishment of all dharmas by the nature of spirituality (i.e. the emanational body), which is arrayed as the lamp of the world, without moving from reality.[1] It Includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview (111.5-133.6)]

This comprises both the tradition of the common vehicles and that of the uncommon vehicles. The former (111.6-130.5) has three aspects which

are with reference to a single supreme emanational buddha-body,[2] namely, the initial cultivation of the mind in supreme enlightenment, the intermediate accumulation of the provisions over three "countless" aeons, [3] and the final attainment of buddha-hood in accordance with the twelve deeds.

[i. As to the first (the cultivation of enlightened mind):]

Countless aeons ago when the Buddha Mahākāśyapa appeared in the world, this Buddha (of ours), Śākyamuni, was known as the boy Bhāskara, the son of a potter. Offering a parasol, a pair of shoes and five hundred cowrie shells, as his flowers (of a offering), he cultivated an (enlightened) attitude, saying:[4]

O Sugata, may I achieve the buddha-body
Similar to yours, however it appears.
And also your retinue, lifespan, fields,
And your supreme noble marks,
However they may appear.

Similarly, when the Buddha Ratnāṅga (dkon-mchog yan-lag) appeared in the world, he was known as Prajñābhadrā, the merchant's son, and cultivated the (enlightened mind). And when the Buddha Roca ('od-mdzes) appeared in the world, he became the king Kuśala who cultivated the (enlightened mind).

[ii. As for the second (his accumulation of provisions over three "countless" aeons):]

Then, during the first "countless" aeon, he perfected the experience of the two provisions, which derived from the possessive condition of fifty-five thousand buddhas, beginning with the Buddha Dhṛtarāṣṭra; and he actualised the path of provisions and the path of connection.[5]

As he said in the Basic Transmission of the Vinaya (T. 1):

When I came into being during the first "countless" aeon,
I made offerings to buddhas
Totalling fifty-five thousand in number—
Beginning with the guide Dhṛtarāṣṭra
Until the sage Indradvaja.
At that time I was not disillusioned (with saṃsāra).

During the second "countless" aeon, he made offerings to sixty-six thousand buddhas starting with the Buddha Sādhurūpa (legs-mdzad), and thus perfected the (bodhisattva) levels from the first to the seventh.[6]

The above text also says:

Beginning with the Buddha Sādhurūpa
Until the guide Vipāśyin.
I made offerings to Buddhas
Totalling sixty-six thousand in number.
At that time I was not disillusioned (with saṃsāra).

During the third (“countless” aeon), he multiplied the basic virtues derived from seventy-seven thousand buddhas, from Dīpaṃkara to Kāśyapa, and thus actualised the three pure (bodhisattva) levels.[7]

The same text says, concerning this:

Beginning with the Buddha Dīpaṃkara
Until the Conqueror Kāśyapa,
I made offerings to buddhas
Totalling seventy-seven thousand in number.
At that time I was not disillusioned (with saṃsāra).

During these (aeons), he mastered the three trainings, and he perfected the six transcendental perfections in accordance with the two provisions.
[8]

It says in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4040):

When the conquerors have mastered the three trainings
They correctly explain the six transcendental perfections.
The first (training) comprises three (perfections).
While the last two (trainings) comprise one (perfection) each.
The one (remaining perfection) is comprised in all three (trainings).

Thus, the trio of liberality, moral discipline and patience are gathered together (respectively) as the cause, essence and branch of the training of superior moral discipline; meditative concentration is gathered in the training of (superior) mind; and discriminative awareness in the training of superior discriminative awareness. Perseverance is an aid for all three (superior trainings).

Now the five (transcendental perfections) from liberality to meditative concentration (are accumulated) as (the provision of) skillful means; whereas discriminative awareness is the discriminative awareness without duality, i.e. the genuine provision of pristine cognition. Through these two (provisions), the twofold obscuration of conflicting emotions and the knowable is purified,

[iii. As for the third (his attainment of Buddha-hood in accordance with the twelve deeds):]

Pious attendants hold that ordinary persons are bound by all manner of fetters, but that some of keenest acumen in their final birth attain

Buddhahood.

In (the Treasury of the Abhidharma, T. 4089), a text of the sublime elder (Vasubandhu) it is said:

Though they are not sublime.
Parents, invalids, teachers of religion.
And the Bodhisattva in his last rebirth
Are said to be worthy beyond measure.[9]

According to those who make the causal phase of the greater vehicle into the path, on the other hand, Buddhahood is first attained in the pure abode of Akaniṣṭha, or in the abode of mighty Īśvara; and starting from then, Buddhahood is revealed in Jambudvīpa.[10]

It says in the Sūtra of the Awakening of the Doctrine and its Rapture (chos-dang longs-spyod mngon-par byang-chub-pa'i / sangs-rgyas-pa'i mdo):

Residing above the pure abodes.
In the supreme and pleasant Akaniṣṭha,
Adorned with diverse gemstones,
The perfect Buddha attained Buddhahood,
And an emanation attained Buddhahood here.[11]

Concerning this mode (of emanation) which has been revealed, the sublime Nāgārjuna has said:[12]

Those who are swayed by compassion
Act to demonstrate their departure (from Tuṣita),
Their birth, display (of youthful prowess).
Departure from the palace, and the practice of austerity.
Their great enlightenment, and the subjugation of Mara's host.
The turning of the doctrinal wheel.
And similarly the passing into (final) nirvāṇa.

In this respect, among these twelve deeds,[13] the first five and the last are called mundane deeds because they are demonstrated in conformity with mundane perception: whereas the others are explained to be supramundane deeds. Actually, however, they are all exclusively supramundane deeds, and are here described accordingly:

[Departure From Tuṣita:]

Now, the first is the deed which transfers consciousness from the Tuṣita heaven. Once (the Bodhisattva)[14] had perfected (the provisions) over three "countless" aeons, he took birth as the holy divine prince Śvetaketu in the abode of Tuṣita.

At that time he was aroused by the following words which emerged through the sound of divine music:[15]

Powerful in your recollection of many provisions
(Accumulated) through a hundred merits.

O infinite intelligence, illuminator of discriminative awareness.
Peerless, mighty and vast in artistic crafts.
Consider the prophetic declaration of Dīpaṃkara.

Thereupon, he sat on the lion throne in the exalted palace of the doctrine and proclaimed to the divine princes who were equal in fortune:
[16]

Friends. twelve years from now I shall proceed to Jambudvīpa. Your Vedic deliberations should be narrated to the blind creatures in Jambudvīpa.

At this injunction, some of the divine princes said:[17]

That place is ignoble. Just now Jambudvīpa is being agitated by six teachers who are eternalistic extremists.[18] Despite your arrival there, beings will not turn to the truth and the abode of Tuṣita Itself will become unpleasant.

Then the Bodhisattva replied:[19]

Let the music play!

He said that he would instruct those eternalistic extremists. Illustrating that he would vanquish them, as it were, by a mightier blow of his conch shell. It is claimed that he made his departure, exhorting Maitreya to be his own regent and having made five considerations: Considering continent, he became an inhabitant of Jambudvīpa, controlled by deeds. Considering time, he chose (the age when) there was a lifespan of one hundred years. Prior to that (age) there would be a lesser degree of disillusionment (with saṃsāra), so that even if the doctrine were taught it would not be understood. And subsequently there would be a greater degree of wrong views so that even if (the doctrine) were taught, beings would not turn to the truth. Considering family, between the royal class (kṣatriya) and the priestly class (brahman) which are held to be supreme by living creatures, he chose on this occasion the family of Ikṣvāku because it was supreme among royal families. Considering father, he chose King Śuddhodana; and considering mother, he chose the beautiful Māyādevī, who had been the father and mother of all the buddhas during the Auspicious Aeon (Bhadrakalpa); and he saw that both of them had taken birth in Kāpilavastu. Then, he taught a hundred and eight approaches to the appearance of the doctrine called "refining the transference of consciousness at death." [20] He said for instance that among these faith was an approach to the appearance of the doctrine through which the sullied mind would be clarified. Thereupon, there were some divine princes who cultivated their minds in enlightenment, and some who became receptive to the uncreated doctrine.[21] There were also others who obtained the Immaculate eye of the doctrine.

At that time a shower of flowers fell knee-deep, and the Bodhisattva said:[22]

At a time when the guide, or lion-like one

Transfers consciousness at death
From the supreme abode of Tuṣita,
The pure gods should be told
To abandon all carelessness.
All the many divine pleasures that there are
And all glories that emerge through mental conception
Totally emerge from the cause of virtuous deeds.
And they are the outcome of virtuous deeds.
Let them remember with gratitude that
This past virtue will cease.
Whereupon they will experience the suffering of non-virtue.
And then fall into evil existences, one at a time.

And he said:[23]

Friends, through which guise should I proceed to Jambudvīpa?

Some said in response that it was proper to go as Brahmā, Śatakratu, and so forth. But there was a divine prince, Ugratejas, who said:

That suggestion is inappropriate because it is biased. You would do well to emanate and go forth in accordance with the following words from the Vedas of the Brahmans:

The sacred elephant, large and supreme in physical form,
Has six tusks and is draped with a golden net.
The head is painted deep red, and beautified.
With cheeks dripping fine (saliva) and noble form.

In conformity with this description, on the fifteenth or fullmoon day of Vaiśākha, the last spring month. his mother dreamt that he entered the womb from her right side, while she was observing a purificatory fast. She said to his father:[24]

I felt that a snow or silver coloured elephant with six tusks
With legs bedecked and head painted red and pleasant,
With noble gait, and perfect body firm as a vajra,
A supreme elephant, passed within me.

The Bodhisattva transformed the womb into a celestial palace, and acted on behalf of limitless living beings.[25]
[The Deed of Taking Birth:]

Then. when ten months had passed, in the grove of Lumbinī, he emerged naturally from the right side of his mother, and was bathed by Gods and Nāga kings. Brahmā and Śatakratu began to raise him in a fold of white silk, but he said:[26]

Depart, you gods, because I am purer.

Without being lifted up, he came forth of his own accord, and took seven steps in each of the four directions, saying:

I am supreme in this world.

At words such as these, the Gods praised him, saying:[27]

The learned make obeisance to you, lord of bipeds.
Who at birth walked seven steps on this great earth.
Saying, "I am supreme in this world".
The learned made obeisance to you.

At that time, in the forest flowers bloomed, and all worlds were filled with great light. Five hundred Śākya youths including Ananda were also born, as were five hundred foals including Kaṇṭhaka, and four sons in four petty kingdoms, namely, Bimbisāra the son of King Mahāpadma in Magadha, Prasenajit the son of King Ānandabrahmadatta in Kosala, Varāloka the son of King Ānantanemi in Takṣaśīla, and Udāyī the son of King Śatasena in Badsala.[28]

Then, these signs were revealed to a brahman who prophetically declared that if he were not ordained as a renunciate he would become a universal monarch, but that if he were ordained he would become a buddha. At that time he was named Sarvārthasiddha, "All-Aims Accomplished"; and he was also named Śākyamuni, "Sage of the Śākyas", because he appeared as a sage among the Śākya youths.

Then, there was a Ṛṣi named Asita or Niṣkleśa (nyon-mongs med) as who lived on the slopes of Mount Sumeru. Seeing these extraordinary omens, he beheld them with his supernormal cognitive powers and came to know that they were omens relating to the prince Sarvārthasiddha. He arrived at the palace through miraculous power and saw the marks (of his buddha-body). in response to an inquiry from the king, the sage replied:

Did you previously show these marks to other learned men?

The king responded:

Yes, I did. It is predicted that he will become a universal monarch.

Then the Ṛṣi responded:

The sophistic lords of the earth will be bewildered.
When he enters into debate he will not become a universal monarch.
This supreme conqueror of defects
Will become a self-born buddha for the sake of living beings.

Seven days after the Bodhisattva was born in this manner, his mother passed away. But, tended by thirty-two nurses including Prajāpatī, he became (full-grown) as a lotus resting on a great lake.

[Proficiency in the Arts:]

Then he went into the presence of the master of letters Sarvamitra, Kṛmivarman, and others, under whom he completed (the study of) writing, archery, and artistic crafts. It was then that the Śākya youths competed (in trials of) strength. Devadatta slew an elephant, striking it with the palm of

his hand, Nanda threw the corpse outside the city, and the Bodhisattva raised it by the tail with his big toe, and cast it outside the seven enclosures of the city, the seven moats, seven rows of sal trees, and so forth.

The defile (where it landed) became known as "Elephant's Defile" (glang-po-che'i gshongs).

At that time, the gods praised him, saying:[29]

The mighty elephant moved like a stone—
Raising the mighty elephant with his big toe,
He hurled it far outside this city.
Beyond seven enclosures and seven moats.
This is undoubtedly a master of supreme learning.
He will cast corporeal beings who possess the power of pride
Far outside the city of saṃsāra.
By the power of his discriminative awareness.

Similarly, when they had competed in the craft (of archery), there were (as targets) seven cauldrons, seven rows of trees, and seven iron walls, among which Devadatta pierced one, Nanda pierced two, and the Bodhisattva pierced them all. On the spot where his arrow alighted, water sprung forth, endowed with the eight qualities (of pure water) and it became known as the "Arrow-Born Well" (mda'-chu khron-pa skyes).

[Enjoyment With A Retinue of Queens:]

He married the girls of the Śākya, namely Gopā with her retinue of twenty thousand, Mṛgajā with her retinue of twenty thousand, and Yaśodharā with her retinue of twenty thousand—sixty thousand queens in all. Then, he continued to live in the palace.

At that time, the following verses emerged through the sound of divine music:[30]

In the past you made the following prayer of aspiration:
"Having seen sentient beings filled with suffering.
May I assist their supreme spiritual and temporal well-being
As a protector, refuge and sanctuary of living beings".
Remember your former conduct, foremost in virtue.
And your aspiration to benefit living beings;
Then depart swiftly from this holy city.

[Departure From The Palace:]

Travelling around the city in its four directions, the Bodhisattva perceived the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death; and directing his intention towards the enlightened attributes of liberation, he wished to become a renunciate. The four gates of the palace were patrolled by the army, who would not permit him to go outside. However, riding upon Kaṇṭhaka, whose hooves were supported by the four (guardian) kings, he approached the Sacred Stūpa (mchod-rten rnam-dag), where he cut off his own hair and became a renunciate.[31] Then he revealed how the

contemplation of nothing-at-all and the contemplation which reaches the pinnacle of existence are actualised, (respectively) in Rājagrha under the guidance of Udraka Rāmaputra, and in Vaiśālī under Ārāḍa Kālāma.[32]

[Austerity:]

Then he went to the banks of the Nairañjana River and practised austerity for six years. During the first two years he ate a single grain of rice. During the middle two years he ate a single sesame seed; and during the last two years he drank a single drop of water.

At that time the gods aroused him, saying:[33]

This lord of humane, son of the Śākyas,
Has not completed his deliberations.
And his very purpose is unfulfilled.
The three worlds suffer without protection.
Will this protector not then pass away?

At these words, he arose from that (austere posture) and set out to find the abode of vajra-like contemplation.[34] On the road, the merchant's daughter Sujātā served him with milk drawn from eight cows, which had previously been drawn from five hundred cows and boiled.

In this way, the colour of his body became golden, and he dedicated her merit as follows:[35]

May whatever merit there is in this pleasant offering
Long achieve all the purposes of this lord of humans
Endowed with supreme intelligence
Until all illustrious purposes are achieved.

[Reaching The Point Of Enlightenment:]

Then, on the road, the grass merchant Svāstika offered him grass (soft) as a peacock's throat. On he went until he reached that place where the Point of Enlightenment (Bodhimaṇḍa) is situated, i.e. the Indestructible Seat (Vajrāsana) and Bodhi Tree which were Immeasurably adorned by bejewelled gods.[36]

Then, seated on a grass mat, he made this firm vow:[37]

Let this body of mine dry up.
Let this heap of skin and bone decay.
I will not move from this position
'Til the enlightenment, hard to gain.
After so many aeons, be attained.

[Subjugation of Māra:]

Then (the Bodhisattva) emanated from his hair-ringlet (ūrṇākeśa) the rays of light which are called "the subduer of Māra's host". The King of Māras then dreamt one hundred and eight dreams—an auspicious vase fell, a victory banner broke, and so forth. When he beheld these, he learned

that the Bodhisattva would attain Buddha-hood.

He arrived at the Indestructible Seat, and said:[38]

The time has not arrived for you to attain Buddhahood.

Whereupon the Bodhisattva replied:

Since I have completed the two provisions during "countless" aeons, the time has arrived for me to attain Buddha-hood. Pay heed that it was by just one offering that you became the King of Māras.

At these words, Māra said:

You bear witness to the ephemeral offering I made here,
But you have no witness here yourself.
Without a witness you have already lost.
Whatever it is you say!

The Bodhisattva responded:

This earth is the support of all beings.
She is just and impartial to animate and Inanimate alike.
O Earth, come be my witness here!

As soon as he had spoken, the Goddess of the Earth exclaimed:

It is fitting because this son of the enlightened family has perfected a multitude of provisions. I can count the whole earth into atomic particles, but I cannot estimate the number of heads and limbs sacrificed by him on behalf of sentient beings.

Shamed by these words, Māra returned to his own domain, where he mustered an army one thousand trillion strong; and he caused a great barrage of missiles to descend on the Bodhisattva.

Accordingly it says in the Sūtra of Renunciation (T. 301):

With one head, two heads, three heads,
And as many as one thousand heads,
(The host of Māra) multiplied.

At that time, (the Bodhisattva) remained equipoised in the contemplation of loving kindness, so that the mass of missiles fell as a shower of flowers and the harsh noises became melodious songs.

Then the gods said:[39]

The causal basis of Māra has been subdued by the power of loving kindness.

The missiles, when hurled, turned into flowers.

And:

The King of the Śākyas saw that things which dependently arise
Are without independent existence.
Because he indeed possesses a sky-like mind
The host of demons and their army could not oppress him.

Furthermore, Mara's daughters attempted to seduce (the Bodhisattva)
but he transformed them into old women, whereupon they implored his
forgiveness.

[Enlightenment:]

Then he became equipoised in the vajra-like contemplation. At dawn
when the drum (of victory) was about to be beaten, he actualised the
contemplation in which (the corruption of saṃsāra) is known to have
ceased, and that in which it is known not to recur. He obtained the three
kinds of awareness or enlightenment of the buddhas.[40]

At that time, the gods praised him, saying:[41]

This lion among creatures has subdued Māra.
He has actualised the concentrations of the Teacher,
And obtained the ten powers and three kinds of awareness.
At which all fields of the ten directions have trembled.

Then he remained for seven weeks without speaking the doctrine.
During the first week, he remained without interrupting his meditative
posture. During the second week, he subdued Jambu-dvīpa, which was
near. During the third week he subdued the trichilocosm afar. During the
fourth he gazed at the Tree itself with unclosing eyes. During the fifth he
departed for the abode of Mucilinda, king of nāgas. During the sixth he
subdued spiritual beings; and during the seventh he was offered honey by
the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika in a grove near the Tree of Liberation
(i.e. the Bodhi Tree).

Thereat, the four (guardian) kings offered him a begging bowl, which
he accepted, saying:

May these two merchants find
Advantage and great profit.

After giving this benediction, he remained there, without speaking the
doctrine. He thought:[42]

I have found a nectar-like doctrine.
Profound, calm, simple, luminous and uncompounded.
If I teach it, no-one will understand;
I will remain right here in the forest in silence.

[Turning the Doctrinal Wheel:]

Thereupon, Brahmā arrived and made the following request:[43]

Having accomplished the maṇḍala of supreme great pristine cognition,

You emanate rays of light in the ten directions.
The lotus of your intelligence blooms
Through rays of pristine cognition.
O sun among teachers, why do you remain indifferent today?
Pray beat the great drum of genuine doctrine.
And blow swiftly the conch of genuine doctrine.
Pray raise the staff of genuine doctrine.
And kindle the lamp of genuine doctrine.

But he said nothing in response to this request. Again, Brahmā summoned Śatakratu and, approaching (the Buddha), offered a golden wheel with a thousand spokes.

He made the following request:[44]

Arise, victor in battle.
And emanate discriminative awareness's light
In the darkness of the world.
Pray reveal your doctrine, O Sage,
Which is most satisfying of all.

And Śatakratu offered a precious gemstone, with the request:[45]

Like the full-moon released by Rāhu,
Your mind is liberated, O Sage.
Arise, victor in battle,
And with discriminative awareness's light
Dispel the darkness of the world.

Thereupon, the Buddha said:[46]

Brahmā, having subdued all the badness of ego.
And having been realised with great difficulty,
This doctrine is not easily realised
By one ensnared by attachment to rebirth.

But Brahmā again made the following request:[47]

Formerly in this country of Magadha
You made contact with the impure tainted doctrine.
Please open the portal of nectar-like (instruction).
And explain the immaculate doctrine.
Without a mote (of obscuration).

The Buddha replied:[48]

Brahmā, I will open the portal of nectar-like instruction
For those who live in Magadha,
Who are attentive, faithful and wise.
Non-violent and constantly attentive to the doctrine.

In this way, he assented.

Instantly the word that the Tathāgata had agreed to turn the doctrinal wheel was heard as far away as Akaniṣṭha, and then a congregation took place.

The sods who were of supreme existence asked where the doctrinal wheel would be turned, and they were told:[49]

In Vārāṇasī—there I made sixty-six thousand sacrificial offerings.
That sacred Vārāṇasī is the abode of the Ṛṣis of the past.
Therefore in that supreme abode which is called Ṛṣi,
The sacred wheel will be turned.

With these words he set out.

Then, in that vicinity, a thousand thrones of precious gemstones emerged. Circumambulating three, he sat upon the fourth. He turned the doctrinal wheel of the four truths for his five noble companions and eighty thousand gods so that they actually realised the truth and the five noble companions obtained the result of arhatship. Then, at Vulture Peak (Gr̥dhra-kūṭa) he turned the wheel (of doctrine) that is free from characteristics for the sake of bodhisattvas, great pious attendants and so forth. Then in the abodes of gods, nāgas and so forth, he turned the final wheel of definitive ultimate truth.[50]

Now, according to the first category of transmitted precepts, one is delivered from saṃsāra chiefly through renunciation and the application of an antidote, in conformity with the gradual perception through which a beginner enters on the path. According to the intermediate (transmitted precepts), the purpose is to refute the clinging to those doctrines of the path and so forth as an antidote through which saṃsāra is abandoned. And according to the final (transmitted precepts), this reality which abides as the fundamental nature of all that is knowable is directly expressed. He also taught (these transmitted precepts) through the three piṭakas, the three trainings, and the greater & lesser vehicles.[51]

[The Final Deed:]

In his eightieth or eighty-second year, (the Buddha) is claimed to have passed into nirvāṇa, next to a pair of sal trees in Kuśinagara.

That this occurred in his eightieth year is stated in the following passage from the Great Treasury of Detailed Exposition (bye-brag-tu bshad-pa'i mdzod chen-mo):[52]

The Sage, supreme being.
Lived for one year each
At (Vārāṇasī), the site of the wheel of the doctrine,
And at Vaiśālī, Makkolam, and the god realms,
Aṭavī and Caityagiri, Venupura, as well as Sāketa,
Śiśumāra Hill and Kauśāmbī,
And the city of Kapilavāstu.
He passed two years in the Jvālīnī Cave,
Three years in Bhaiṣajyavana,
Five years in Rājagṛha,

Six years practising austerity.
And twenty-four years in Srāvastī.
He had spent twenty-nine years in the palace.
So it was that the Conqueror,
The supreme and holy Sage,
Passed into nirvāṇa at the age of eighty.
To those meritorious places
Where the Omniscient One resided,
I make obeisance at all times.
Bowing reverently with body, speech and mind.

Furthermore, it was in order to train the majority of those requiring training who held to eternalism that his intention passed into final nirvāṇa during the last watch of the night as the full moon was setting. After the funeral pyre had been Ignited, it is explained that the relics were divided into eight parts; and four tooth-relics were appropriated by different potentates.

It is said in the Transmissions of the Vinaya (Vinayāgama. T. 1-7):[53]

Among the eight measures of relics
From his Buddha-body endowed with discernment.
Seven were acquired for worship by the inhabitants of Jambuvdvīpa.
And one measure of these supreme remains
Was worshipped by the king of the Nāga city Rāvaṇa.
Among the four tooth-relics of this supreme being
The first was worshipped in the mundane world of Trayatrimśa,
The second in the pleasant city of Gandhāra,
The third in the land of the king of Kaliṅga,
And the fourth tooth-relic of this supreme being
Was worshipped by the king of the Nāga city Rāvaṇa.
King Aśoka who lives in Pāṭaliputra
Has vastly increased the seven stūpas.
Mightily, too, he has adorned this earth
With manifest objects of prayer.
So it was that the relics of this Buddha-body
Endowed with discernment
Were worshipped most reverently
By the lords of Gods, Nāgas and Humans.
And by the masters of Humans, Nāgas and Yakṣas.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On this function of dharmakāya see above, Ch. 1, note 23

[2]:

In the present case, Śākyamuni.

[3]:

A “countless” aeon (grangs-med bskal-pa) is a specific temporal dimension, enumerated in Abhidharmakośa at 10 [59]. See R. Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology*, pp. 113ff.

[4]:

N. L.

[5]:

On sambhāramārga and prayogamārga, see below, pp. 506-507, and e.g., Sgam-po-pa, *The Jewel Ornament Liberation*. pp.

[6]:

On the first to seventh levels, from which regression is possible, see below, pp. 964-968; also Sgam-po-pa, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-248.

[7]:

On the three pure levels, i.e. the eighth to the tenth, which are those of non-regression, see below, pp. 964-968, and Sgam-po-pa, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-252.

[8]:

On the three trainings and six transcendental perfections, see below, notes 62 and 69. The two provisions are those of merit (puṇyasambhāra) and pristine cognition (jñānasambhāra).

[9]:

Abhidharmakośa. Ch. 4, v. 118.

[10]:

On this assertion, see above, pp. 357ff.

[11]:

Cf. Laṅkāvatāra. Ch. 10, v. 38ab & 39cd.

[12]:

N. L.

[13]:

Concerning the enumeration of twelve deeds (mdzad-pa bcu-gnyis). see below, pp. 495-496; also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 18-40.

[14]:

I.e. Śākyamuni before his enlightenment at the bodhimaṇḍa. on which see also below, note 36.

[15]:

Lalitavistara. II. v. 1.

[16]:

Lalitavistara, III, 8-10.

[17]:

Lalitavistara, III.

[18]:

I.e the following six contemporaries of Śākyamuni: Vardhamāna, Sañjaya, Ajita Keśakambalin, Pūrāṇa Kāśyapa, Maskarīputra Gosāla, and Kakuḍḍa Kātyāyana.

[19]:

Lalitavistara, III.

[20]:

These dharmāloka mukha are enumerated in Lalitavistara. IV. PP. 23-25.

[21]:

Sanskrit anutpattikadharmakṣānti: Lalitavistara. IV, 1. 17.

[22]:

Lalitavistara. IV, v. 1-3.

[23]:

Lalitavistara. V, p. 20, 1. 11-20.

[24]:

Lalitavistara. vi, v. 1.

[25]:

See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, p. 20. Cf. Lalitavistara. VI.

[26]:

Lalitavistara. VII.

[27]:

Lalltavistara. VII.

[28]:

On these kingdoms and personalities, see HBI, Chs. 1-2, pp. 1-25. and A. Csoma de Körös, The Life and Teaching of Buddha, p. 27.

[29]:

Lalitavistara. XII, v. 17-18.

[30]:

Lalitavistara. XIII, v. 1-3.

[31]:

According to HBI, p. 346, the Sacred Stūpa (mchod-rten rnam-dag) is located near Rāmagrāma, east of Kapilavastu. For another opinion, however, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, notes.

[32]:

Lalitavistara. XVI and XVII; also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1. These contemplations are associated with the formless realms at the summit of existence in saṃsāra. See NSTB, Book 1, pp. 7b-11b.

[33]:

Lalitavistara. XVIII.

[34]:

Refer to Abhidharmakośa, Vol 2, pp. 966-970, in which Yaśomitra compares this vajropamasamādhī to a diamond drill which pierces all because it pierces all dispositions.

[35]:

Lalitavistara. XVIII.

[36]:

Lalitavistara. XIX-XX. The term bodhimaṇḍa refers to the outer place and time at which Śākyamuni attained enlightenment, i.e. the Vajrāsana at Bodh Gayā; and also to the inner bodhimandala or Akaniṣṭha realm, and the secret bodhimaṇḍa or vajrakāya.

[37]:

Lalitavistara. XIX, v. 57.

[38]:

Lalitavistara. XXI, v. 87-88.

[39]:

Lalitavistara. XXI.

[40]:

These three kinds of awareness (traividyatā, Tibetan rig-pa gsum) are the three higher supernormal cognitive powers (abhijñā), viz. knowledge of past lives, of the transference of consciousness at death and rebirth, and of the cessation of corruption. On the ten powers (daśabala). see above, pp. 384-5, note 62.

[41]:

Lalitavistara. XXII, v. 2; and for the account of his seven weeks silence, *ibid.*, XXIV.

[42]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 1.

[43]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 9 and 11.

[44]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 18.

[45]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 17.

[46]:

Lalitavistara, XXV.

[47]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 21.

[48]:

Lalitavistara. XXV, v. 34.

[49]:

[50]:

On the distinctions between these three promulgations, see NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 3.

[51]:

On the three pl takas, the three trainings and the classifications of the vehicle, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 16a-28a.

[52]:

The complete text of the Mahāvibhāṣa is extant only in its Chinese translation (Taishb 1545). On this quotation, cf. NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, p. 40.

[53]:

On the traditions connected with the original reliquaries and relics mentioned in this quotation, see HBI, pp. 24-25; A. Bareau, *Recherches sur la Biographie du Buddha*. II.II, pp. 308-323; I.B. Horner, *Chronicle of the Buddhas*. p. 98; and J.F. Fleet, "The tradition about the Corporeal Relics of Buddha" in JRAS, 1906, no. 2. pp. 655-671. 881-913: and 1907, no. 1, pp. 341-364.

Introduction 2: (Inconceivable Emanations)

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[Secondly, there is the overview according to the uncommon vehicles (130.5-133.6):]

The Teacher Samantabhadra, without straying from the buddha-body of reality, manifests inconceivable emanations in the worlds of the ten directions from his disposition of spirituality, arising as the body of perfect rapture; and he trains the six classes or five types of living beings. In particular, in the world-system of Patient Endurance (Sahalokadhātu) he manifests the bodies of the Thousand Buddhas and so forth, who grant instruction according to the perception of those to be trained.

It is said in the Tantra of Sky-Like Pristine Cognition (ye-shes nam-mkha'-dang mnyam-pa'i rgyud):

Derived from Samantabhadra, the perfect rapture.
Are the countless emanations who grant instruction.
In particular, in the world of Patient Endurance,
He appears as the Thousand And Two Buddha-Bodies.

The last two are Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi.[1]

According to this (passage), these manifestations arise naturally from the disposition of the buddha-body of reality.

It also says in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4042):

Through great spirituality, the knower of the world
Perceives all world-systems,
And without straying from the body of reality.
Through the diverse nature of his emanations.
He reveals these deeds to impure realms
For the duration of the world's existence:
He is actually born (among the gods),
And he descends from the Tuṣita realm.
He enters the womb and takes birth.
Becomes proficient in the arts.
Enjoys the company of his queens.
Renounces the world, practises asceticism,
Reaches the Point of Enlightenment, Vanquishes Māra's host.
Attains perfect enlightenment,
(And turns) the doctrinal wheel;
He then demonstrates (final) nirvāṇa.

And in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Just as immeasurable reflections appear
In a vessel of water when the moon shines
But the moon is without duality.
So the learned who lack desire
Attain Buddha-hood in desireless forms.
Manifesting in all fields.
The Buddhas are not dualistic appearances.
And nor are they a single entity.
The Buddha-body is neither two nor three.
In accordance with the aspiration of sentient beings
It manifests immeasurably.
The Buddha-body is not past.
Nor is the future the Buddha-body.
It manifests in an immediate manner.
The forms which assume this magical display
Are not created and will not come into being.
Thus the body of the Tathāgatas
Is above all revealed through the uncreated nature.

And in the Sublime Sūtra Which Penetrates The Range Of The Tathāgata's Inconceivable Pristine cognition (t. 185):

The Buddha said, “Mañjuśrī, it is for example, just as at midnight the disk of the moon's ascending node is known to be the lunar disk facing each of all the sentient beings in Jambudvīpa, but the lunar disk itself does not conceive or think why it should be facing those sentient beings in order for sentient beings to recognise it as the lunar disk. Indeed, Mañjuśrī, the lunar disk emerges as such spontaneously and without conception because it is endowed with distinct attributes. In the same way, Mañjuśrī,

the Tathāgata, Arhat, or completely perfect Buddha too is seen as the Tathāgata present before all beings within the immeasurable unequalled inconceivable unappraisable inexpressible saṃsāra. However, Mañjuśrī, the Tathāgata does not conceive or think that he should be present before those sentient beings in order for sentient beings to know that the Tathāgata is present before them. Indeed, the Tathāgata is present just as he is seen by sentient beings. Mañjuśrī, when there is someone to be trained by perceiving the Tathāgata's body to be golden in colour, the body of the Tathāgata does appear golden in colour. Likewise, when there is someone to be trained (by perceiving) his body to be beryl, sapphire, corundum or red pearl in colour, he becomes present in these very colours. And similarly, when there is someone to be trained by the guardians of the world, Śakra, Brahmā, Īśvara, antigods, humans, animals, the denizens of hell, or the mundane Yama beings, he becomes present in these very forms, and teaches the doctrine.”

Through these topics the overview is completed.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The standard enumeration of the Thousand Buddhas associated with this Sahalokadhātu is given in the Bhadrakalpikasūtra. In the tradition of rdzogs-pa chen-po, two additional emanations are included. See kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, theg-mchog mdzod. p. 24. Elsewhere, these are stated either to be Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuśrī (phyogs-bcu mun-sel. p. 131) or Lha-'i bu nyi-ma rab-tu snans-ba and dsa;'-byed dbang-phyus (sgra-thal-'gyur and dPa'-bo chos-'byung. p. 200).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.1]

Then the six eases, embodiments of awareness who are said to be the blessing of great spirituality that emerges from all the Tathāgatas, came forth from the indestructible body, speech and mind of the Tathāgatas. [1]

...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-las / thugs-rje chen-po'i byin-gyis
brlabs zhes-bya-ba'i / rigs-pa'i skyes-bu thub-pa drug / de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i
sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las 'thon to / [1]

Commentary:

After the explanation of the discourse initiated (by the male and female consorts Samantabhadra), then (de-nas) the six (drug) emanations or sages (thub-pa) came forth from the indestructible body, speech and mind of the

Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i sku-dang gsung-dang thugs-rdo-rje-las 'thon-to) of this self-manifesting array. These, including Śākyamuni, are said to be (zhes-bya-ba'i) naturally arisen from the blessing of great spirituality (thugs-rje chen-pp'i byin-gyis rlabs) that emerges by itself from all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-las) of the self-manifesting array. They are embodiments of awareness (rig-pa'i skyes-bu) because they themselves are the pristine cognition of the Buddhas; and they grant instruction to their respective six classes of living beings of the six worlds because they have subdued all deeds and conflicting emotions.

[An Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (134.3-169.4)]

The second part has three sections: a general teaching on emanation by means of the four kinds of instruction, a particular exegesis of the nature of the living beings who are the object of these instructions and of their doctrines, and a synopsis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as self-manifestations of mind and pristine cognition.

[1. General Teaching On Emanation By Means of the Four Kinds of Instruction (134.4-155.6):]

[The first comprises both an abbreviated teaching and a detailed exegesis—the former (commenting on Ch. 3.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.2]

... Having come forth, each of these great sages or transcendent lords also acts on behalf of the five classes of living beings through four kinds of instruction in each great trichiliocosm of the infinite and limitless ten directions of the six worlds where, by the power of deeds, (beings) move, facing laterally, upwards or downwards. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

'thon-nas-kyang las-kyi dbang-gis snrel-zhi-dang yan-man-gyi 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas mu-med-pa'i stong-gsum-gyi stong-chen-po re-rer / thub-pa chen-po bcom-ldan-'das re-res 'dul-ba rnam-pa bzhis 'gro-ba lnga'i don mdzad-de / [2]

Commentary:

[The first comprises both an abbreviated teaching and a detailed exegesis—the former (commenting on Ch. 3.2):]

The six sages having come forth ('thon-nas) in this way, their world-

systems also appear differently by the power of (kyi dbang-gis) the respective deeds (las) accumulated by living beings. Briefly, there are worlds ('jig-rten) which are round, square, crescent-shaped and triangular, along with the hollowed nadir and the uncovered zenith, where living beings move laterally (snrel-gzhi), indicating that their heads are lopsided, and upwards or downwards (yan-man-gyi), indicating that their heads face up or down. in each (re-rer) world-system of the great trichiliocosm (stong-gsum-gyi chen-po), naturally pervading all of the ten directions of these six (drug-gi phyogs-bcu) dissimilar container-worlds, infinite (mtha'-yas) in number and parts and limitless (mu-med-pa'i) in their forms of happiness, sorrow, rapture and so forth, each great sage or transcendent lord (thub-pa chen-po bcom-ldan-'das re-res), granting his own particular instructions. also (kyang) acts on behalf of the five classes of living beings through his own four kinds of instruction ('dul-ba rnam-pa bzhis 'gro-ba'i don mdzas-de).

Now these (four kinds of instruction) are namely, instruction by merit, instruction by the direct perception of all meanings, instruction by great miraculous abilities, and instruction by knowledge.

It also says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

The distinctions of deeds are inconceivable.

The world of the hells slopes downwards.

The world of Yama is lateral.

Animals, gods and humans move upwards.

However, the animals are also (sometimes) considered to be included in the category of the lateral.

So it is that in the world-system of a single trichiliocosm, the container-world and its sentient contents who are subsumed in the five classes (of living beings) and endowed with three kinds (of motion)—lateral, upwards and downwards—are the field of instruction for the emanational body. On this point, there are some who hold that the six worlds comprise those of the four directions which are lateral, along with a nadir which is downward facing and a zenith which faces upwards, but they do not even partially perceive the central meaning.

The latter (the detailed exegesis of the four kinds of instruction) has four sections, namely. Instruction by the great merit of buddha-body and its excellent deeds, instruction by direct perception or the great supernormal cognitive power of buddha-mind, instruction by great inconceivable miraculous abilities, and instruction by knowledge conveyed in the five vehicles of buddha-speech.

[The first (comments on Ch. 3.3):]

[Read next page]

[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.3]

... The sages who demonstrate birth, renunciation, austerity, Buddha-hood, the subjugation of Māra, the turning of the doctrinal wheel, the demonstration of great miracles, the passing into nirvāṇa, and so forth, [3]

...

[Tibetan]

bltams-pa-dang / rab-tu byung-ba-dang / dka'-thub mdzas-pa-dang / sangs-rgyas-pa-dang / bdud-btul-ba-dang / chos-kyi 'khor-lo bskor-ba-dang / cho-'phrul chen-po ston-pa-dang / mya-ngan-las-'das la-sogs-par ston-pa'i thub-pas [3]

Commentary:

The sage who demonstrates (ston-pa'i thub-pas) the great miracles of deeds in order to mature immeasurable living beings through his great emanation of buddha-body instructs Inconceivable living beings; i.e. (he demonstrates) the birth (bltams-pa-dang) of the buddha-body, the renunciation (rab-tu byung-ba-dang) or rejection of household life, the austerity (dka'-thub mdzas-pa-dang) on the banks of the Nairāṇjana River and so forth, the buddha-hood (sangs-rgyas-pa-dang) in Vajrāsana, the subjugation of Māra's (bdud-btul-ba-dang) host, the turning of the doctrinal wheel (chos-kyi 'khor-lo bskor-ba-dang) in Vārāṇasī, the demonstration of great miracles (cho-'phrul chen-po bstan-pa-dang) at Śrāvastī, and the passing into nirvāṇa (mya-ngan-las 'das-pa) at Kuśinagara. The words and so forth (la-sogs-par) refer to (the others) in addition to these eight (deeds) which are universally taught. Included among them are his transference of consciousness from Tuṣita, his proficiency in the arts, his enjoyment with a retinue of queens, his arrival at the Point of Enlightenment, his subjugation of a rutting elephant at Rājagṛha, his teaching of the doctrine to his mother in Tuṣita, and the subjugation of a great Yakṣa in Aṭavi.[1]

There are some who hold that his deeds number twelve, but that is not definite because he is additionally said to demonstrate miracles, and the other (deeds) are interspersed with these. The enumeration of twelve deeds subsumed in the words and so forth (la-sogs-pa) is merely illustrative. In short, all acts which instruct living beings by the great miracles of buddha-body are subsumed therein.

[The second (instruction by direct perception, comments on Ch. 3.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

in addition to the present account derived from the Lalitavistara, see

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.4]

... [the passing into nirvāṇa, and so forth,] [3] are endowed with the six great supernormal cognitive powers, namely, entire knowledge of the four times, entire knowledge of the continuum of the minds of all beings, entire perception of everything through the eye of miraculous ability, entire hearing through the ear of miraculous ability, performing acts of entire benefit through the provision of miraculous ability, and perfecting the conduct of Samantabhadra, entirely positive with respect to the uncorrupted. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

dus-bzhi kun-tu mkhyen-pa-dang / thams-cad-kyi sems-kyi rgyud kun-tu mkhyen-pa-dang / rdzu-'phrul-gyi spyan-gyis thams-cad kun-tu gzigs-pa-dang / rdzu-'phrul-gyi snyan-gyis kun-tu gsan-pa-dang / rdzu-'phrul-gyi tshogs kun-tu don-spyod-pa-dang / zag-pa med-pas kun-tu bzang-po'i spyod-pa rdzogs-pa'i mngon-par shes-pa chen-po drug-dang [4]

Commentary:

[Instruction by direct perception]

The sages are endowed with the supernormal cognitive power of knowing past abodes, i.e. they have direct perception of all knowable things because of their entire (kun-tu) knowledge of (mkhyen-pa-dang) the four times (dus-bzhi), such as the past. Through mastery over the recollection of many lives, they instruct living beings. The four times are known in the manner of the forms (of past and future events) which appear on an oracular mirror.

Furthermore, they possess the supernormal cognitive power of knowing the minds of others. Essentially this is the entire (kun-tu) knowledge (mkhyen-pa-dang) at all times and in all circumstances, without differentiation, of the nature of all conflicting emotions and conceptual thoughts belonging to the respective minds of all beings (thams-cad-kyi sems) among the five or six classes of living beings who require to be trained. without exception. and also of the intention or continuum of (kyi-rgyud) pristine cognition, which is the perceptual knowledge of the buddhas.

They also grant instruction through the supernormal cognitive power of clairvoyance. i.e. the divine eyesight which is manifestly compounded. This is the entire perception of everything (thams-cad kun-tu gzigs-pa-dang) through the eye of (spyan-gyis) unobscured miraculous ability

(rdzu-'phrul-gyi), or the perception of pristine cognition. its range encompasses the transference of consciousness at death. and the birth and emanation of living beings in both pure Buddha-fields and impure world-systems.

Then, they instruct sentient beings through the supernormal cognitive power of clairauidence. i.e. the entire hearing of (kun-tu gsan-pa-dang) every language in all world-systems. great and small, through the ear of miraculous ability (rdzu-'phrul-gyi snyan-gyis).

They Instruct through the supernormal cognitive power of miraculous ability, performing entire acts of benefit (kun-tu don spyod-pa-dang) in accordance with the volition of living beings through the provision of miraculous ability (rdzu-'phrul-gyi tshogs-kyis) which teaches each sentient being according to his or her needs.

And they instruct through the supernormal cognitive power of the cessation of corruption, naturally and wholly perfecting (rdzogs-pa'i) the conduct (spyod-pa) associated with the inexhaustible wheels of adornment. i.e. the Buddha-body, speech and mind of Samantabhadra. He is entirely positive (kun-tu bzang-po'i) and conclusive with respect to the uncorrupted (zag-pa med-pas) pristine cognition in which the twofold obscuration and propensities are without exception purified in the expanse.

In this way they Instruct through the buddha-mind, or the six great supernormal cognitive powers (mngon-par shes-pa chen-po drug), because through these six all knowable things are directly mastered.[1]

[The third (instruction by miraculous abilities, comments on Ch. 3.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the six supernormal cognitive powers (śaḍabhijñā), see also below, p. 1016; and NSTB, glossary of enumerations. They are respectively lha'i mig-gi mngon-shes (divya-cakṣurabhijñā), lha'i rna-ba'i mngon-shes (divyāśrotirabhijñā), pha-rol-gyi sems shes-pa'i mngon-shes (paracittābhijñā), rdzu-'phrul-gyi bya-ba shes-pa'i mngon-shes (rddhyabhijñā), sngon-gyi gnas rjes dran-pa'i mngon-shes (pūrvanivāsānusrmṛtyabhijñā), and zag-pa zad-pa'i mngon-shes (āśravakṣyābhijñā).

Text 3.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.5]

... They are endowed with the Buddha-body inconceivable to all, the

Buddha-mind Inconceivable to all, the Buddha-visage inconceivable to all, and the Buddha-speech inconceivable to all. Countless inconceivable forms are manifested in the ten directions. [5] ...

[Tibetan]

kun-tu sku bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang / kun-tu thugs bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang / kun-tu zhal bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang / kun-tu gsung bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang ldan-pa/ bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa grangs-med-pa phyogs-bcur snang-bar gyur-to [5]

Commentary:

[The third (instruction by miraculous abilities):]

The sages are revealed to be endowed with (dang-ldan-pa) inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang) forms of the buddha-body (sku) such as Brahmā, Satakratu, and a universal monarch which conform in their appearance to all (kun-tu) the infinite beings requiring training. They demonstrate the inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang) beneficial deeds of the buddha-mind (thugs) which qualitatively knows (the view) and quantitatively knows (phenomena), corresponding in their volition to all (kun-tu) the Immeasurable minds of living beings; and the inconceivable Buddha-visage (zhal bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa-dang) which manifests as the many different deities, peaceful & wrathful and so forth, with their dissimilar maṇḍalas of body, guise and visage, to all (kun-tu) the range of those who are to be trained, with their dissimilar sensory bases and volitions, corresponding at each distinct moment to their respective perceptions. Because this buddha-visage directs the loving kindness of buddha-mind exclusively towards oneself, it is felt to be present before one.

It says accordingly in the Great Mother (T. 8):

These sentient beings of Jambudvīpa feel that the doctrine is revealed because the loving kindness of buddha-mind is present exclusively before them.

In this way the sages grant teaching from the continents of Videha and Aparagodanīya as far as Akaniṣṭha.[1]

Also, It is said in the Buddhasamāyoga Tantra (T. 366-7):

Sometimes peaceful, sometimes wrathful.
And sometimes as the great spirits who cause obstruction,
(They appear) in infinite supreme forms such as these.
And as all kinds of mountains and living creatures.[2]

And in the Sūtra Requested by Subāhu (T. 805):

Although his nature is without desire or hatred.
To those who are endowed with desire
He ostensibly reveals a desirous form;

And to instruct the venomous beings
He reveals wrathful forms to the wrathful.
Obeisance to this guide, endowed with skillful means.

In this manner, a single buddha-body reveals inconceivable modes of buddha-visage.

And in addition, the sages possess the inconceivable buddha-speech (gsung bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa) of the doctrine which manifests as sound to all (kun-tu) fortunate living beings that there are. corresponding to the languages of different sentient beings, inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa) forms are diversely emanated in the infinity of space so that countless (grangs-med) enumerations are manifested (snang-bar gyur-to) in the ten directions (phyogs-bcu), instructing each in accord with his or her needs.

The fourth, instruction by knowledge conveyed in speech comprises both an overview and interlinear commentary. The former (139.6-152.5) includes both a verbal definition and a classification (of the vehicle through which knowledge is conveyed in speech).

As to the firsts The word "vehicle" (theg-pa). derived from (the Sanskrit) yāna, means that which progressively reaches or conveys one to a desired (goal) by reliance on some (instruction).

It says in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

This vehicle is a great palace
Immeasurable as the sky.
Riding on that, which is the best of vehicles.
Manifestly attaining to delightful bliss.
All sentient beings pass into nirvāṇa.

The second (the classification) includes both general and particular classifications. As to the former: in general, it is to discipline the conflicting emotions of the minds of sentient beings that the Buddhas' spirituality is demonstrated to each in accord with his or her needs. Consequently, one cannot affirm that the number of the vehicles is specifically determined.

It says in the Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā (T. 107):

In order to guide sentient beings completely,
I have explained the entire vehicle.
As such it is not an object of reference.

However, if (the vehicle) is provisionally subsumed, it is said, with an intention directed towards the result, to be one.

The White Lotus of the Genuine Doctrine (T. 113) says:

The vehicle is one.
It is not divided into two.

And in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):[3]

Existentially there is only one...

Yet, with an intention directed towards both cause and result, there are said to be two (vehicles), and with an intention directed towards the greater and lesser (vehicles) they are also said to be two.

The Tantra of the Glorious Cessation of the Four Elements (dpal 'byung-bzhi zad-pa'i rgyud) says:

Because there are causal doctrines and the result,
This vehicle is indeed twofold.

And in the Lamp of Pristine Cognition (ye-sron):

Because there are intellects
Endowed with greater and lesser degrees of acumen.
The enumeration of the vehicle corresponds.
When subsumed, it has two aspects—greater and lesser.

Furthermore, when (this vehicle) is classified according to its greater and intermediate aspects, it is said to be threefold, comprising those of the pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and the greater vehicle.

It says in the Ornament of the the Sūtras of the Vehicle (t. 4020):

In accordance with the thorough classification
Of connections, provisions, attitudes, exegeses and attainments.
The vehicle is held to be threefold.

And in the Tantra Gemstones, the Secret Seminal Point (gsang-ba thig-le nor-bu 'i rgyud) there are also explained to be three aspects, rather than just outer and inner stages:

Three vehicles—outer, inner and secret
Excellent grasp the genuine doctrine.

There are also explained to be four, namely the three causal vehicles and the resultant one, as is stated in the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (T. 360; NGB. Vol. 15):

Attaining disillusionment through the three vehicles.
One abides in the result of the single vehicle.

And in the Eight Volumes of Nectar (T. 841; NGB. Vol. 26):

This inconceivable teaching numbers eighty-four thousand;
Yet there are said to be three approaches to the vehicle.
And a fourth subsumed in the secret vehicle itself.

Again, the enumeration (of the vehicle) has been subsumed, such that it

is explained to be fivefold. This text says (Ch. 3.15):

When disillusioned with the four vehicles.
One abides in the result of the single vehicle.

And in the Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā (T. 107):

The vehicle of gods and the vehicle of Brahmā.
And likewise the vehicle of the pious attendants,
Tathāgatas and self-centred buddhas
Have been differently explained.

Then, there are also explained to be six vehicles in accordance with the higher and lower classifications of cause and result.

The All-Accomplishing King (T. 828) says:

There are six vehicles of definitive attainment.

And there are even explained to be seven, as is said in the Summation of the Maṇḍala (T. 3705):

Gods, humans, pious attendants,
Self-centred Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
And both outer and inner secrets—
These are explained to be the seven vehicles.

There is explained to be an enumeration of eight, as is said in Vajrasattva, the Great Space (NGB. Vol. 2):

In this way, surpassing the eight vehicles...

Additionally, a ninefold enumeration is explained.

The All-Accomplishing King (T. 828) says:

That which has emerged has emerged in the nine vehicles.

There are even explained to be sixteen vehicles, namely, the two basic vehicles of gods and humans, the five outer (Non-Buddhist) vehicles and the nine inner (Buddhist) vehicles. as well as the vehicle of the indestructible nucleus of inner radiance.[4]

It says in the Tantra of the Illuminating Sun, the Nucleus (snying-po nyi-ma rab-tu snang-byed-kyi rgyud):

The first of the vehicles is the protector of the sixteen.

Indeed, the vehicles are explained to be inconceivable (in number), as is said in the Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā (T. 107):

As long as sentient beings manifest
There will be no end to the vehicles.

The abiding nature, however, is merely labelled as a vehicle, and is not really such, as the same text says:

When the mind becomes transformed.
There is neither vehicle nor mover.

In brief, all these (enumerations) merely appear in accordance with the stages of intelligence (of those to be trained), and, apart from that, the very expression "vehicle" is baseless for yogins of essentially pure Intelligence. One should know therefore that (the abiding nature) is like space.

As to the latter, the particular classification has five aspects: There is the vehicle of gods and humans, and the vehicles of pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, bodhisattvas, and secret mantras.

Among them, the first (the vehicle of gods and humans) has both a verbal definition and a classification. The expression "vehicle of humans" is derived from (the Sanskrit) term manuṣyayāna, and the expression "vehicle of gods" from the term devayāna.

Their classification is similarly twofold: The vehicle of humans causes birth as a human being of the higher worlds because the ten non-virtues are abandoned and the ten virtues are practised. These ten virtues are named after their function which is to renounce the ten non-virtues. The three physical non-virtues—to kill, to steal, and to commit sexual misconduct; the four verbal non-virtues—to lie, to slander, to talk irresponsibly, and to utter abuse; and the three mental non-virtues—to covet, to be malicious, and to hold wrong views, are all abandoned. The vehicle of gods, on the other hand, causes birth among the six classes of divinities of the desire realm because the nature of the ten virtues is intensively experienced; among the seventeen classes of divine abode in the form realm because the four meditative concentrations are experienced; and in the four activity fields of the formless realm through the experience of the four formless absorptions.

It says in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):[5]

The practice of the ten virtues and renunciation of non-virtues
Causes birth among the gods and humans of the desire realm.
The practice of the four immeasurables and unwavering meditation
Causes birth in the Brahmakāyika and so forth.

Furthermore, the ground (of this vehicle) is (the view) that one becomes conscious of acceptance and rejection with respect to virtue and evil respectively, and is aware of the nature of the meditative concentrations and formless absorptions. The path is conduct with reference to the ten virtues; and the result is birth in the abodes of different (gods and humans).

The second is the vehicle of the pious attendants, which is also twofold: The verbal definition is that (the Tibetan) term thos-sgrogs (lit. preacher of

what has been attentively heard), derived from (the Sanskrit) śrāvaka. indicates one who listens to the doctrine in the presence of the Teacher and verbally communicates it to others.

The classification is threefold: The ground is (the view) that there is neither self nor possessor with reference to the components and extraneous individuals: and one abides in the three trainings, having established the awareness of objects or objective phenomena to be relative, and their Indivisible atomic particles to be ultimate; while the mental continuum is relative and its indivisible time moments ultimate truth.[6]

The path entails that during the lesser, middling and greater stages of the path of provisions one meditates respectively on the four recollections, the four correct renunciations, and the four stages of miraculous ability. During the feeling of warmth and its climax on the path of connection one meditates on the five faculties of faith, perseverance, recollection, contemplation, and discriminative awareness, and during the feeling of receptiveness and the supreme phenomenon one meditates on the five powers of faith and so forth. During the path of insight, one meditates on the aspects of genuine enlightenment, namely, recollection, analysis of the doctrine, perseverance, delight, refinement, contemplation, and equanimity. Then during the path of meditation one meditates on the eight aspects of the sublime path, namely, correct view, thought, speech, goal of activity, livelihood [livelihood?], effort, recollection, and contemplation. As to the result: One abides in the expanse of quiescence having obtained either the residual or the non-residual (nirvana). Above all, one practices acceptance and rejection with reference to the four truths, and so obtains the highest among the sixteen moments on the path of insight and so forth. [7]

The result is then actualised, namely, that of one who enters the continuum (to enlightenment), one who is in a penultimate birth, one who is in a final birth, and one who is an arhat.[8]

It says in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):

One who is well-pacified by training
In the sixteen-faceted pristine cognition,
Which understands the meaning and is well renounced
In respect of the four truths,
And who has been trained through the succession (of results)
Such as entering the stream.
Proceeds to the level on which the enemy,
Conflicting emotion, is pacified.

The third is the vehicle of self-centred buddhas, which is also twofold: The verbal definition refers to (the Sanskrit) term pratyekabuddha, pratyeka meaning "individually" or "for oneself alone", and Buddha meaning "one who is pure and extensive" (Tibetan sangs-rgyas). It refers to one who, during a final birth, naturally cultivates in his mind the realisation of the path, without regard for oral instructions revealed by a master, and then actualises enlightenment. Now, there are three kinds (of self-centred buddha)—one of great conduct in respect of the provisions,

one of lesser conduct, and one who abides in the solitary manner of a rhinoceros.[9]

When this vehicle is classified, it has three aspects: As to the ground, one knows that saṃsāra arises by entering into the mode of dependent origination with respect to outer and inner phenomena, and that nirvāṇa is obtained by reversing that mode. Then it is realised that the selfhood of individuals and external objects too are without Independent existence. [10]

It says in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):

Since they renounce the idea of objects.
And since they do not renounce the subject.
One must know the path genuinely subsumed therein
Is that of a rhinoceros-like recipient.

As to the path: It is superior (to that of the pious attendants) because in addition to meditation on the thirty-seven doctrines of enlightenment, in the manner of the pious attendants, there is also meditation on dependent origination. The result is that when enlightenment has been obtained, (a self-centred buddha) does not reveal the doctrine verbally to sentient beings, but he does demonstrate it symbolically, so that they come to understand it and pass into nirvāṇa.

It says in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):

Knowing outer and inner dependent origination as an optical illusion.
They thoroughly penetrate substantial forms without Impediment.
They become realised through intrinsic awareness.
Untaught by a spiritual benefactor.
And with supreme bliss of purpose proceed to an enlightened level.

The level of the arhats among those (self-centred buddhas) is called the resultant level with supreme bliss of purpose.[11]

The fourth is the vehicle of the bodhisattvas, which is also twofold: The verbal definition is that (the Sanskrit) term Bodhisattva has the meaning of "spiritual warrior of enlightenment" (Tibetan byang-chub sems-dpa'). A bodhisattva vanquishes the baseness which, supports his own desire for Buddha-hood, and assumes through great power of compassion the implements (lit. dons the armour) which liberate living beings.

The Verse Summation (T. 13) says:

With greater intelligence, greater liberality and greater mind.
He dons a mighty armour and tames the causal basis of Māra.
Therefore he is called a bodhisattva, spiritual warrior of enlightenment.

When classified, this vehicle has three aspects: As for the ground, all things subsumed in phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvana, are realised to be without independent existence, in the manner of a reflected image. The two kinds of selfhood, namely, the selfhood of individuals and

the selfhood of phenomena, including both external objects and subjective mind, are comprehended to be emptiness. Thereafter, the two kinds of enlightened mind—of aspiration and the actual entrance—are cultivated.
[12]

As to the path, the thirty-seven attributes of the path, and, with reference to conduct, the six or ten transcendental perfections are studied; while the ten levels are refined. The ten (transcendental perfections) include those of skillful means, power, aspiration, and pristine cognition, in addition to the six transcendental perfections; and all of them are gathered in the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness.[13]

The result is that the two kinds of benefit become spontaneously accomplished once one is present on the eleventh omniscient buddha-level, Universal Light (Samantaprabhā).

It says in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):

The yogin who has perfected the transcendental perfections.
Who has realised the two kinds of selflessness.
And who has gradually traversed the ten levels,
Will excellently attain by means of the two truths.
The path through which the buddha-level is reached And its status is attained.

Now, the two truths are the ultimate and the relative truths. The relative truth is the diverse phenomena of apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; whereas the ultimate truth is the mind-as-such, the reality in which all conceptual elaborations are quiescent, transcending objects of Intellectual thought.

The Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) says:

The ultimate is not within range of the intellect.
The intellect is held to be relative.

The adherents of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka hold that all things appear to be relative. but when investigated are ultimately without independent existence.[14] It says in the Analysis of the Two Truths Madhyamaka (T. 3881):

This appearance which accords with the relative
Is not found at all when investigated with awareness;
That which is not found is itself the ultimate.
The reality which primordially abides.

The adherents of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka hold that, whether analysed or not, all things at all times are quiescent of conceptual elaboration and free from all propositions.[15]

It says in the Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861):

Just as you hold substances to have dependent existence.

I have not admitted even relative existence.

And in the Root Stanzas on Discriminative Awareness (T. 382U):

It is characterised as being
Unexpressed through conceptual elaboration.

And:

Obeisance to the truth of the Buddhas' words
Which have perfected the teaching
That anything emerging dependently
Neither ceases nor is created.
Neither is transitory nor eternal.
Neither comes nor goes.
Neither is difference nor Identity.
And is quiescent of conceptual elaboration,
Showing the peace (of nirvāṇa).

When the relative is classified, there is an erroneous relative in which appearances are not causally effective such as the (reflection of the) moon in water, and there is a correct relative in which appearances are causally effective, such as the moon in the sky.[16]

It says in the Analysis of the Two Truths of Madhyamaka (T. 3881):

Since they are similarly apparent.
But respectively causally effective and ineffective.
The classification of the correct
And erroneous relative has been made.

Indeed. on analysis. both the correct and the erroneous are the same in the fact that they appear. On further investigation, they are also the same because they do not actually exist as such. Therefore all phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. abide in sameness from the present moment, without classification.

The ultimate, on the other hand, is beyond the Intellect and thus its essence cannot be classified. However, if tentatively classified by the intellect, the fundamental ultimate reality refers to all things as being empty of inherent or independent existence.

There is a sūtra which says:[17]

Subhūti, it is as for example space is neither filled nor diminished when someone praises it or someone does not praise it. Similarly, the genuine real nature is indivisible whether the essence of the Tathāgatas' doctrines is expressed as the nature of ultimate unique quiescence, or whether it is revealed by other eternalist parivrājikas to be a constant, enduring phenomenon.

When the yogin who meditates on this real nature cultivates the intelligence free from conceptual elaboration. It is called the ultimate truth

to which synonyms are applied.[18]

It says in the Analysis of the Two Truths of Madhyamaka (T. 3881):

Although creation and so forth are refuted.
This (refutation) is claimed to be in harmony with genuine reality.
The ultimate is symbolised as non-creation
And a quiescence of all conceptual elaboration.

Actually this method is explained to be characteristic of relative truth because it is an object of the intellect, and merely designates the ultimate truth.

The fifth is the vehicle of secret mantras which comprises both outer and inner aspects.

The outer aspect is threefold. among which the Kriyātantra has both (verbal definition and classification): The verbal definition is that the tantra of action (Tibetan bya-ba'i rgyud). Kriyā (in Sanskrit), is so-called because it emphatically teaches ablution and cleanliness. When classified, it has three aspects: As to the ground, it is established that once all things have been realised to be without independent existence, the deity or being of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) is beheld as a king, from whom the accomplishment is then derived.[19] On the path, the deity is visually created, and then offerings are made, with reliance on the austere and pure nature of their reality and so forth. The result is that the enlightenment of the buddhas is held to be obtained after sixteen human lives.[20]

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

According to Kriyātantra, oneself and the deity are as servant and master;

One is held to be liberated through the labours of sixteen human lifetimes.

The Caryātantra or Ubhayatantra is also twofold: The verbal definition is that it is called ubhaya (in Sanskrit), "the vehicle of both", because in conduct (caryā) it conforms to Kriyātantra. and in meditation to Yogatantra. When classified, there are three aspects of Caryātantra: As to the ground, it is understood that accomplishment derives from discriminative awareness without Independent existence, and from skillful means which holds oneself and the deity to be equal. as the being of commitment (samayasattva) and the being of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) respectively.[21] According to the path, one meditates in that manner and performs acts of cleanliness as in Kriyātantra, with the result that one is held to be liberated within seven human lifetimes.[22]

The previous text says:

According to Ubhayatantra, oneself and the deity are both seen to be equals;

Hoping for accomplishment to be conferred, as if by a friend.

The result of liberation within seven human lifetimes is held.

The Yogatantra is also twofold: The verbal definition is that (the Sanskrit) term yoga refers chiefly to mental meditation, while the view and conduct are both held to assist it. When classified, there are three aspects of Yogatantra: As to the ground, it is established that discriminative awareness without independent existence and the being of pristine cognition in which oneself radiates as the deity abide, in the manner of water that is poured into water. The path is meditation according to that view, assisted by the habitual conduct of cleanliness, so that in the result, one is held to be liberated within three human lifetimes on the level of the Bounteous Array (Ghanavyūha).[23]

The previous text says:

One who desires the Bounteous Array of Yogatantra
Desires liberation within three human lifetimes.

The inner (vehicles of the) secret mantras also are threefold. Among them, the father tantras of Mahāyoga are (explained) in two aspects: The verbal definition is that, derived from (the Sanskrit) term mahāyoga, (Tibetan rnal-'byor chen-po), the Mahāyoga or Great Yoga refers to (the vehicle) in which one is held to be liberated chiefly by the creation stage where there is a union (yoga) of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and by the practices of vital energy.[24]

When classified, there are three aspects of Mahāyoga: The ground comprises the maṇḍala of the deity and the action of vital energy because these are primordially pure. The path is meditation on these, and, as to the result, one is held to be liberated within this very lifetime.[25]

It says in the Display of Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rol-pa):

By activating the vital energy of pristine cognition
And perfecting the "milking of space".[26]
Which depend on the stages of creation and perfection,
One will be well liberated in a single lifetime.

The mother tantras of discriminative awareness (i.e. Anuyoga) are also (explained) in two parts: The verbal definition is that, derived from (the Sanskrit) term anyuyoga. (the Tibetan) rjes-su rnal-'byor or Subsequent Yoga indicates that one upholds the perfection stage of discriminative awareness, where the expanse and pristine cognition are without duality. When classified, there are three aspects of Anuyoga: The ground is the nature of the primordially pure deity in whom the expanse and pristine cognition are without duality. The path is meditation thereon, and the result is that within this lifetime, the buddha-body of supreme bliss is actualised.[27]

It says in the Tantra of the Supreme Seminal Point (thig-le mchog-gi rgyud):

Whoever meditates on the mind-as-such or inner radiance,

Without dichotomy of the expanse and pristine cognition.
Which is the supreme bliss
Will attain the result of perfect Buddha-hood
In this lifetime.

The non-dual tantras (i.e. Atiyoga) are also (explained) in two aspects: The verbal definition is that, derived from (the Sanskrit) term *atī* (the Tibetan) *shin-tu rnal-'byor* or Highest Yoga indicates that everything is primordial Buddha-hood because the uncreated essential nature or nucleus of all things is penetrated. When classified, there are three aspects of Atiyoga: The ground is that all things of phenomenal existence, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, are the nature of primordial Buddhahood. The path is e that, without duality of creation and perfection (stages), acceptance & rejection, hope & doubt are transcended. The result is that one conclusively abides from the present moment on the spontaneous perfect level of Samantabhadra. in this vehicle all (the others) are themselves perfected.
[28]

The Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14) says:

In intrinsic awareness, the king
Who realises the truth of sameness.
And in these great skillful means
Which realise the unsurpassed truth.
All the inconceivable vehicles to liberation
Are gathered without exception.
Just as all rivers flow into great oceans.

Through these topics the overview (of the instruction by knowledge conveyed in speech) has been explained.

As for the interlinear commentary (on instruction by knowledge conveyed in speech, 152.5-155.6), it has three parts, namely: the divisions of the vehicle; the antidotes as which these are taught: and an exegesis of the meaning of these (vehicles).

[The first (comments on Ch. 3.6):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. throughout the realms of *kāmadhātu* and *rūpadhātu*. See NSTB, Book 1, chart.

[2]:

This refers to the three kinds of emanational Buddha-body (*nirmāṇakāya*), enumerated in, e.g., NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 50bff., as emanations of natural expression (*rang-bzhin sprul-pa*), emanations which train living beings (*'gro-ba 'dul-ba'i sprul-pa*), and diversified emanations (*sna-tshogs sprul-pa*), which include inanimate objects.

[3]:

On this quotation, see above p. 19, note 21.

[4]:

This is the enumeration inferred in kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha'i mdzod. pp. 361ff., where the treatise is concluded by a discussion of the 'od-gsal rdo-rje snying-po'i theg-pa, i.e., the thod-rgal system of rdzogs-pa chen-po. The five non-Buddhist vehicles are those of Sāṃkhya, Vaiṣṇava, Aiśvara, Jainism, and Nihilism, on which see also below, pp. 988-990 and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 11b-16a. On the nine Buddhist vehicles, see above, pp. 18-19.

[5]:

On these realms, virtues, meditative concentrations, and formless absorptions, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 7b-11b, and the chart.

[6]:

On the three trainings of śīla, prajñā, and citta, and the śrāvaka view of subject and objective forms, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 17bff., Pt. 3. PP. 68b-71a. 121b-124a. See also below, pp. 991-992, on the eighteen divisions of the śrāvaka.

[7]:

On these thirty-seven branches or aspects of enlightenment (bodhipakṣadharmā) and the corresponding five paths, see Har Dayal, op. cit., pp. 80-165, and NSTB, Book 1, glossary of enumerations.

[8]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 124a; also on these four results of śrotāpanna, sakṛdāgāmi, anāgāmi, and arhat (Mahāvvyutpatti 5132-5136), ibid., glossary of enumerations.

[9]:

On the pratyekabuddhayāna and its three divisions, see also below, p. 992; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 70a-70b, 124a-127a.

[10]:

On pratītyasamutpāda, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, PP-124a-127b. As stated therein, in the rNying-ma view, the internal objects or mental phenomena are not realised by Pratyekabuddhas to be without Inherent existence. See also below, p. 992.

[11]:

Tibetan 'bras-bu yld-bzhin bde-ba mehog. See also NSTB, Book 1. Pt- 3. P- 127a.

[12]:

On the bodhisattvavāna, see below, pp. 992-993; also Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Buddhist Literature; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 71a-121a, 127a-131b. On the distinctions between smon-pa'i byang-sems and 'lug-pa 'i byane-sems in particular, see Sgam-po-pa, The Jewel Ornament Liberation, pp. ii2ff.

[13]:

On the bodhisattvayāna's approach to the aforementioned thirty-seven branches or aspects of enlightenment and the five corresponding paths, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 128ff.; also Sgam-po-pa, ibid.. pp. 232ff. On the six pāramitā. ibid.. pp. 1218-231; Har Dayal, op. cit. pp. 165-270. See also below, pp. 9621-968 for their status in Mahāyāna.

[14]:

On the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka system from the rNying-ma standpoint, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 72b-73b; also H.V. Guenther, Buddhist Philosophy Jin Theory and Practice. pp. 104-105.

[15]:

On the Prāsaṅgika position from the rNying-ma standpoint, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 73b-77a; and H.V. Guenther, ibid.. pp. 101ff. For a comprehensive account of the Indian background to this school, see D.S. Ruegg, The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy. in J. Lindtner, and for a dGe-lugs-pa statement, J. Hopkins, Meditation on Emptiness.

[16]:

For a discussion on tathayāsamvṛtisatya and the mithyāsamvṛtisatya. see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 72bff., 127aff.

[17]:

N. L.

[18]:

On this paryāyaparamārthasatya. and the aparyāyaparamārthasatya to which synonyms cannot be applied, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 72bff.

[19]:

On Kriyātantra, see also below, pp. 995-996; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 11, pp. 150b-153a, 213a-215b.

[20]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 11, pp. 153a, 215b, where this result is also held to be achieved in seven lifetimes.

[21]:

On Caryātantra or Ubhayatantra, see below, pp. 995-996; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 153ab, 215b-216b.

[22]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 153b, 216b, where a period of five lifetimes is specified.

[23]:

On Yogatantra, see below, p. 996; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 11, PP. 153b-154b, 216b-219b. On the Ghanavyūha Akaniṣṭha realm, see above pp. 357-389.

[24]:

On Mahāyoga and its emphasis on utpattikrama and the control of vital energy (rlung, Sanskrit vāyu). see also above, pp. 23-25. and below, Chs. 11-12; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 156a-162b, 221a-224a.

[25]:

For the specified duration of this lifetime, see below, pp. 810-811.

[26]:

Tibetan nam-mkha'i 'jo-ba rab-rdzogs-pas. This refers to the practice of inner heat associated with the Caṇḍālī energy channel (gtum-mo), in which the essential nectar of the white syllable A melts and descends within the body from the crown-centre. See also below. Ch. 13, PP. 1018-1019 and the quotation from sgyu-'phrul rgya-mtsho on p. 1006, where the expression "cow of space" (nam-mkha'i ba) occurs.

[27]:

On Anuyoga and its realisation of the mahāsukhakāya, see above pp. 25-26; and also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4., pp. 162b-166b, 224a-228a.

[28]:

On Atiyoga, see above pp. 26-27, and below. Ch. 13, PP-997, 1022-1050; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. fl, pp. 169a-211b, 228a-229b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.6]

... All (these emanations) Indeed act as follows: By the power of their instruction, through the vehicle of Gods and humans, the vehicle of pious attendants, the vehicle of self-centred Buddhas, the vehicle of Bodhisattvas, and the unsurpassed vehicle, [6] ...

[Tibetan]

thams-cad-kyang 'di-lta-ste / 'dul-ba'i dbang-gis lha-dang mi'i theg-pa-dang / nyan-thos-kyi theg-pa-dang / rang byang-chub-kyi theg-pa-dang / byang-chub sems-dpa'i theg-pa-dang / bla-na med-pa'i theg-pas [6]

Commentary:

All (thams-gad) these excellent pronouncements of the emanational body are indeed (kyang) revealed within five vehicles to act as follows ('di-lta-ste): By the power of their instruction ('dul-ba'i dbang-gis) which is given to sentient beings, there is the vehicle of the gods (lha) of the formless, form and desire realms which teaches the ten virtues, and the vehicle of humans (-dang mi'i theg-pa-dang) which itself concerns the ten virtues. There is the vehicle of pious attendants (nyan-thos-kyi theg-pa-dang) which actualises the status of an arhat by meditation on doctrines which refer objectively to the nature of the four truths through renunciation and acceptance, and on the thirtyseven attributes (of enlightenment). There is the vehicle of self-centred buddhas (rang byang-chub-kyi theg-pa-dang) which progresses to the level with supreme bliss of purpose by meditation on dependent origination and the five paths. There is the vehicle Of Bodhisattvas (byang-chub sems-dpa'i theg-pa-dang) which actualises Buddha-hood through the two kinds of selflessness and the ten transcendental perfections: and there is the unsurpassed vehicle (bla-na med-pa'i thee) of secret mantras which liberates in this lifetime by knowing all things to be the three maṇḍalas,[1] and by meditation on the profound path. Through (-pas) these vehicles...

[The second (the antidotes as which these vehicles are taught comments on Ch. 3.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. the maṇḍalas of ground, path and result. See above, pp. 20, 59-61; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 147b-150b.

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... [and the unsurpassed vehicle,] [6] they have taught, are teaching and will teach the eighty-four thousand doctrines as an antidote for the eighty-four thousand conflicting emotions, which are conceptual thoughts of Ignorance. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

ma-rig-pa'i rnam-par rtog-pa nyon-mongs-pa stong-phrag brgyad-cu
rtsa-bzhi'i gnyen-por / chos stong-phrag brgyad-cu rtsa-bzhi gsungs-so /
gsung-ngo / gsung-bar 'gyur-ro [7]

Commentary:

[The antidotes as which these vehicles are taught:]

As an antidote for the eighty-four thousand conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs-pa stong-phrag brgyad-cu rtsa-bzhi'i gnyen-por), twenty-one thousand of which each comprise the conflicting emotions of desire, hatred, delusion, and their equal combination and which are created by conceptual thoughts of ignorance (ma-rig-pa'i rnam-par rtog-pa) in the minds of living beings, those teachers who emanate from the naturally present pristine cognition in conformity with the perception of those to be trained have taught (gsungs-so) previously, are teaching (gsung-ngo) even at the present moment in the worlds of the infinite limitless ten directions, and will teach (gsung-bar 'gyur-ro) in the future the eighty-four thousand (stong-phrag brgyad-cu rtsa-bzhi) approaches of the doctrines (chos)—twenty-one thousand of which belong to each of the three piṭakas of the Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma, and to the Piṭaka of the Mantras where (their distinctive features) are in equal combination.

[The third (the exegesis of the meanings of these vehicles, comments on Ch. 3.8):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.8]

... As for all these (vehicles) too: They concern respectively the dichotomy of object and subject: the outer and inner dependent origination; [the realisation that] this apprehension is exaggerated from bewilderment; the productive nature of deeds and of the results of deeds; and the conclusion revealing that which is uncovered, will not be covered and cannot be covered by deeds or the results of deeds. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

de-dag thams-cad-kyang gzung-ba-dang 'dzin-pa'i / phyi-nang-gi rten-cing 'brel-par 'byung-ba dang / 'dzin-pa 'khrul-pa-las 'dogs-pa [rtogs-pa]-dang / las-dang las-kyi 'bras-bu chud mi-za-ba-dang / las-dang las-kyi 'bras-bus mi-gos / gos-par mi-'gyur / gos-su med-par ston-pa'i mthar-thug-go [8]

Commentary:

The third (the exegesis of the meanings of these vehicles, comments on Ch. 3.8):

As for all these (de-dag thams-cad) doctrinal categories taught within the five vehicles too (kyang), they belong to or concern respectively: the vehicle of pious attendants who, surpassing the intelligence of ordinary beings who uphold (the existence of) gross external objects, know indivisible atomic particles to be the ultimate truth—i.e. they acknowledge a dichotomy of (-pa'i) the object (bzung-ba) without (compounded) self, and (dang) an inner mind or series of indivisible time moments, also without (compounded) self. in this way they apply an antidote for the apprehension by a subject ('dzin) of the components as a self (or inherently existing entity).

Then there is the vehicle of self-centred buddhas who know that the outer (phyi) dependent origination is false because objects of external appearance do not ultimately exist even as indivisible atomic particles, but are relatively understood to resemble a reflected image arising in a pool of water, and who know that, when there is ignorance, (saṃsāra) emerges from habitual tendencies as far as old age and death but that when ignorance is reversed the cycle of saṃsāra is also reversed as far as old age and death. They thus realise that the selfhood of the individual and the selfhood of phenomena which externally appear are nonexistent. So it is that, they meditate on inner dependent origination (nang-gi rten-cing 'brel-par 'byung-ba) and apply an antidote for the apprehension of selfhood in external objects, which comprise half of phenomena.[1]

Then there is the vehicle of bodhisattvas who actualise the two kinds of selflessness. They are held to be superior because the bodhisattva establishes, in addition to the previous one-and-a-half parts of selflessness (realised by self-centred buddhas), that the intellect or antidote which is the subject of that meditation, i.e. this mental apprehension ('dzin-pa) of inner phenomena as a self, is itself [exaggerated ('dogs-pa)] from (las), or an object of bewilderment ('khrul-pa), and he has the realisation (rtogs-pa)[2] that it too is non-existent.

The vehicle of sōds and humans reveals the productive nature of (chud mi-za-ba-dang) causal deeds (las). positive and negative, and of the results of deeds (las-kyi 'bras-bu), which individually ripen.

Accordingly, it says in the Hundred Parables on Deeds (T. 340):

Deeds are productive even over a hundred aeons.
Once the (appropriate) provisions and time have been obtained.

Their results will ripen in corporeal beings.

This surpasses the tenet of the Outsiders that deeds are without results.
[3]

Further, on the necessity of attaining liberation dependent on the vehicle of sods and humans, the Jewel Garland (T. 4158) says:

If the doctrinal tradition of human beings is well practised.
Progress to the sod realms is not remote;
If the doctrinal tradition of the sods is well practised.
Liberation is gradually approached.

And (in the Collection of Meaningful Expressions. T. 213):

The correct view for a mundane being
Is to possess that which is great;
Even in a thousand lifetimes
One will not turn to evil existences.

And then the supreme vehicle of the unsurpassed secret mantras is the conclusion (mthar-thug-go) or realisation revealins (ston-pa'i) the abidins nature, which is uncovered (mi-gos) with respect to body, will not be covered (gos-par mi-'gyur) with respect to speech, and cannot be covered (cos-su med-par) with respect to mind by those deeds or the results of deeds (las-dang las-kyi 'bras-bus). There are no ordinary appearances because the three media (of body, speech and mind) are known to be the three primordial maṇḍalas (of buddha-body, speech and mind).

[ii. Particular Exegesis of the Mature of Living Beings who are the Object of these Instructions and of their Doctrines (155.6167.1):]

The two topics (discussed in this section) respectively demonstrate that the nature of saṃsāra is reality and that the nature of the doctrine is inexpressible.

The former, on the nature of living beings who are the object of these instructions (156.1-160.3), has six sections. namely: the background motivation; the appearance of saṃsāra through ignorance; the teaching that from the very moment of this appearance its nature is reality; the teaching that bewildering appearances are the miraculous display of mind; the baseless and groundless nature of bewildering ideas; and the teaching that conceptual thought is the display of pristine cognition.

[The first, (the background motivation. comments on Ch. 3. 9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, see above notes 62-67. The distinction between the outer and inner pratītyasamutpāda which deal

respectively with physical elements and mental components, is drawn in e.g., NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p.125a.

[2]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa here reads rtogs-pa. Cf. Lo-chen Dharmasīrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. p. 130.4, who reads 'dogs-pa, Both interpretations have been included.

[3]:

I.e. the view of "those of no understanding" (ma-rtogs-pa) and of the Aśvara and Nihilists among "those of wrong understanding" (log-rtogs-pa). See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 11b-16a.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.9]

... Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression. [9] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis ched-du brjod-pa 'di-brjod-do
[9]

Commentary:

[The background motivation:]

Once the miracle of the four kinds of instruction had been revealed, then (de-nas) all the (thams-cad-kyis) self-manifesting Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) uttered this meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do).

[The second (the appearance of saṃsāra through ignorance, comments on Ch. 3.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.10]

The phenomena of mundane bewilderment, as many as they are,

Revolve in a duality of outer and inner dependent origination
Through the subject-object dichotomy of Ignorance and ideas,
And they produce disharmonious experiences of happiness and
suffering. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

ji-snyed 'jig-rten 'khrul-pa'i chos /
ma-rig rtog-pa'i gzung-'dzin-gyis /
phyi-nang rten-'brel gnyis-su 'khor /
mi-mthun bde-sdug myong-bar 'gyur / [10]

Commentary:

[The appearance of saṃsāra through ignorance:]

All the phenomena of mundane bewilderment ('jig-rten 'khrul-pa'i chos) subsumed in the container-world and its sentient contents, which appear as the impure outer and inner phenomena, as many as they are (ji-snyad), are like a dream. The essence or abiding nature where Buddha-hood is primordially attained is oppressed by ignorance (ma-rig) with its darkest sleep. Conditioned through the subject-object dichotomy of (-pa'i gzung-'dzin-gyis) dualistic ideas (rtog), the diverse outer (phyi) objects which are flesh-coloured (dkar-dmar) and the immeasurable inner (nang) forms of living beings appear. Sentient beings revolve ('khor) like the wheels of a chariot in a duality of (gnyis-su) outer and inner dependent origination (rten-'brel), through which resultant bewildering appearances emerge from the cause of bewilderment. And these produce ('gyur) the experiences of (myong-bar) diverse happiness and suffering (bde-sdug) which are the particular attributes of disharmonious (mi-mthun) objects and appearances, along with the perpetual appearance (of these beings) which continues from one citadel of saṃsāra to another.

[The third, (teaching that from the very moment of this appearance its nature is reality, comments on Ch. 3.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.11]

Their nature Itself does not degenerate from reality—
Genuine reality, dualistic in an illusory manner.
Does not differentiate between possessor and possessed.
It is the pure expanse itself, the unique mode. [11] ...

[Tibetan]

rang-bzhin nyid-las nyams-pa-med /
yang-dag sgyu-ma'i tshul-gnyis-su /
bdag-dang bdag-gi gzhan-med-de /
rnam-dag dbyings-nyid tshul-gcig-go / [11]

Commentary:

[Teaching that from the very moment of this appearance its nature is reality:]

Although it appears as such, the nature (rang-bzhin) of this saṃsāra does not degenerate from (las nyams-pa med) the reality (nyid). sameness or great perfection of primordial liberation. This is because its nature is indeed emptiness.

Accordingly it also says in the King of Contemplation (T. 127):

The conquerors' son destroys objective form.
All existences that there are are primordially empty.
Those who uphold the extreme of ephemeral emptiness
And those who are puerile sophists cannot dispute this.

From the very moment when saṃsāra appears, it does not actually exist but is the abiding nature of genuine reality (yang-dag). It does appear to be dualistic in a (gnyis-su) mere relative or illusory manner (sgyu-ma'i tshul), but when analysed does not differentiate between (gzhan-med-de) the possessor (bdag) or subject of saṃsāra and the possessed (dang bdag-gi) objects of a saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Just as the the appearances in a dream and the dreamer's own mind are not dualistically differentiated. Mind-as-such is perceived in that manner.

It says accordingly in the Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā (T. 107):

Mind-as-such, where there is no object,
Is mistakenly seen as an external object.
Through habitual tendencies, the agitated mind
Actually comes into appearance.

However, when saṃsāra appears it itself (nyid) is the unique (gcig) primordial mode (tshul) in the pure (rnam-dag) and self-manifesting expanse (dbyings). the pure reality. Thus the Intention of the spontaneous perfect buddha-body of reality is one of unique (gcig-go) equilibrium in its great primordial pervasion of all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

It says in the Root Stanzas of Madhyamaka entitled Discriminative Awareness (T. 3824):

There is not the slightest difference
Between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
The distinctions between these two
Do not even minutely exist.

And in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):

There is sameness with respect to existence and quiescence.

[The fourth, (teaching that bewildering appearances are the miraculous display of mind, comments on Ch. 3.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.12]

Extraneous phenomena associated with possessor and possessed
Have neither subtlety nor profundity
Apart from mere erroneous thoughts themselves.
There is an interaction between the nature of
Erroneous thoughts and (the thoughts) themselves,
But there is no extraneous wavering. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

bdag-dang bdag-gi gzhan-rnams-ni /
log-par rtog-pa tsam-nyid-las /
phra-zhing zab-pa'ang yod-ma-yin /
log-rtog nyid-la nyid spyod-pas /
gzhan-du gYyo-ba ci-yang med / [12]

Commentary:

[Teaching that bewildering appearances are the miraculous display of mind:]

Concerning the differences between oneself and extraneous phenomena (gzhan-rnams-ni) which are intellectually appraised by, and associated with, the apprehension of the possessor and the possessed (bdag-dang bdag-gi): these are one's own mere erroneous thoughts themselves (log-par rtog-pa tsam-nyid). and apart from (las) that, do not actually exist. When the nature of these erroneous thoughts is investigated, they indeed have neither (yod-ma-yin) subtlety nor (phra-zhine) phenomena endowed with subtlety: nor do they have the profundity (zab-pa'ang) of real attributes, which are distinct from those phenomena. This is because erroneous thought itself abides as reality.

This is also stated by the master Padmasambhava in his Buddhasamāyoga Commentary (sangs-rgyas mnyam-sbyor):

If thought is known to be reality,
There is no basis for meditation
Apart from the expanse of reality.

And consistently, in his Creation And Perfection Stages (bskyed-rdzogs) it also says:

Thought is an impediment.
The Impediment emerges from one's own mind.
If the primordial mind-as-such is known.
The so-called impediment does not extraneously exist.

These appearances within the subject-object dichotomy of saṃsāra are an interaction between the (spyod) object, or dream-like apparitional nature of (nyid) erroneous thoughts (log-rtog), and (la) the subject—one's own erroneous thoughts themselves (nyid). But (-pas), although these do appear as bewilderment, actually there is no extraneous wavering (gzhan-du gYo-ba ci-yang med) from mind-as-such, the real abiding nature, just as the fluctuations of the four elements do not diverge from the disposition of space, or as thoughts of refutation and proof do not stray from the disposition of mind-as-such.

The All-Accomplishing King (T. 828) says:

Whatever appears is one in its real nature.
In this respect, there is no-one who contrives it.
From this king of uncontrived sameness.
The intention of non-conceptual Buddha-body
Is spontaneously present.

[The fifth, (the baseless and groundless nature of bewildering ideas, comments on Ch. 3.13):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.13]

Despite the continuity of erroneous thoughts
In terms of cause and result.
They are the baseless and groundless expanse.
The indivisible time moments are the nature
Of the pure expanse itself, [13] ...

[Tibetan]

log-rtog rgyu-'bras rgyun-nyid-kyang /
gzhi-rtsa-med dbyings skad-cig-ma /
rnam-par dag-pa'i dbyings-nyid-tshul / [13]

Commentary:

[The baseless and groundless nature of bewildering ideas]

Despite the continuity (rgyun-nyid kyang) of those erroneous thoughts (log-rtog), appearing as the bewildering subject-object dichotomy, in terms of cause (rgyu) and the result ('bras) produced thereby, which seem to be related in a temporal succession of past and subsequent moments, it is non-existent when investigated. The essence of awareness abides in the originally pure abiding nature, the baseless and groundless (gzhi rtsa-med) expanse (dbyings) of reality; but when it arises as the diversity (of thought), it has no continuity and indeed has the nature of a series of distinct indivisible time moments (skad-cig-ma). Furthermore, there is no past indivisible time moment which has ceased, no future indivisible time moment which is found) and, when even a present indivisible time moment is investigated, it does not exist outwardly, inwardly, or in between. Indeed, there are no such things as indivisible time moments. They are awareness, the nature (tshul) which abides as the essence of the primordially pure (rnam-par dag-pa'i) sky-like expanse (dbyings) of reality itself (nyid).

It says in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

Kāśyapa, wherever this mind is sought, it is not subsequently seen to be genuinely internal. It is not subsequently seen to be genuinely external: nor is it even subsequently seen to be genuinely in between. It is like the sky.

[The sixth, (teaching that thought is the display of pristine cognition, comments on Ch. 3.14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.14]

Transformations which occur in relation to it.

Thus, self, others and the continuity of thought.

According to the pure unsurpassed vehicle, are supreme attributes. [14]

...

[Tibetan]

nyid-la dbang-sgyur-nyid spyod-phyir /
bdag-dang gzhan-dang rtog-pa'i rgyun /
rnam-dag bla-med theg-pa'i mchog / [14]

Commentary:

[Teaching that thought is the display of pristine cognition]

The display of subjective intelligence diversely arises in relation to this (nyid-la) originally pure reality, which is the essence of all appearance and mind and the object in which primordial Buddhahood is attained. All these transformations (dbang-sgyur-nyid) are themselves the self-manifesting pristine cognition which occur (la-spyod) in relation to pristine cognition itself. Thus (phyir), the apprehension of self (bdag-dang) and others (gzhan), and the (dang) entire continuity of thought (rtog-pa'i rgyun) which arises as refutation, proof and the five poisons are a display of pristine cognition. According to the primordially pure unsurpassed vehicle (rnam-dag bla-med theg-pa'i). they are supreme attributes (mchog).

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Hatred, desire and delusion too
Emerge from the path of treat enlightenment.
The five modes of malpractice too[1]
Are said to be ornaments of reality's expanse.

And:

According to the unconceived unrefined doctrine.
Pristine cognition is born from conceptual thought.

And:

Know that all recollections, awareness, and thoughts whatever
Are objects of the uncontrived all-accomplishing reality.

The latter (see p. 523) teaches that the nature of the doctrines is inexpressible (160.3.-167.1). It has six sections, namely: it teaches that the unsurpassed vehicle is the result disillusioned with the four vehicles: it teaches that all things are a miraculous display without independent existence; it teaches that, although the teacher and teaching do not change, they instruct each according to his or her needs for the sake of those to be trained: it teaches that the natural Secret Nucleus is the emanational basis of all vehicles; it teaches that this itself is the general commentary on all the sūtras and tantras; and it teaches that all things apart from their mere names, words and labels are non-existent in the abiding nature.

[The first, (teaching that the unsurpassed vehicle is the result disillusioned with the four vehicles, comments on Ch. 3.15):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan kun-spyod yon-tan lnga. This refers to malpractices relating to conduct of body, speech, mind, attributes and actions.

Text 3.15 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.15]

Disillusioned with the four vehicles,
One abides in the result of the single vehicle. [15] ...

[Tibetan]

theg-pa bzhi-yis nges-'byung-la /
theg-pa gcig-gis 'bras-bur gnas / [15]

Commentary:

[Teaching that the unsurpassed vehicle is the result disillusioned with the four vehicles]

Then one becomes disillusioned (nges-'byung-la) with the four vehicles (theg-pa bzhis) which have previously been taught[1] because, among other reasons, they have their respective aspects of disharmony or suffering in saṃsāra and are lesser vehicles. After becoming disillusioned with them, one abides (gnas) on the buddha-level, i.e. in the result ('bras-bur) of the single (gcig-gi) unsurpassed vehicle (theg-pa), where the natural Great Perfection is encountered. This is the nature in which reality, transcending acceptance, rejection, effort and attainment, is realised.[2]

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Nine natural vehicles of the Teacher

Indeed form the path which progresses to natural Great Perfection.

But once this reality without acceptance or rejection has been realised.

Its nature is spontaneously present. Just as it is.

Spreading all-pervasively, without coming or going.

[The second, (teaching that all things are a miraculous display without independent existence, comments on Ch. 3.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. those of the śrāvakas [śrāvakayāna], pratyekabuddhas [pratyekabuddhayāna], bodhisattvas [bodhisattvayāna], deva [devayāna] and manuṣya [manuṣyayāna].

[2]:

Here the resultant Atiyoga aspect of Anuttarayogatantra is emphasised.

Cf. the quotation from the kun-byed rgyal-po, above p. 19.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.16]

When well investigated by genuine realisation
Everything becomes present from that (disposition)
Where there is no independent existence. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

yang-dag rtogs-pas rab-brtags-na /
rang-bzhin med-las cir-yang 'grub / [16]

Commentary:

[Teaching that all things are a miraculous display without independent existence:]

When the phenomena of apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvana, have been well Investigated (rab-brtags-na) with awareness by a yogin who has genuine realisation (yang-dag rtogs-pas) of the meaning of the abiding nature, one should know that everything becomes present (cir-yang 'grub). arising as a conditional or apparitional mode from that (las) disposition of the abiding mode, where there is no independent existence (rang-bzhin-med), in the manner, for example, of a miraculous apparition in the sky, a magical display, or a reflected image.

It says in the King Contemplation (T. 127):

Just as swirls of clouds instantly emerge
From a totally cloudless atmosphere
And then disintegrate so that
There is no swirl of clouds.
One should similarly know that all phenomena
Are seen to emerge from this original (nature).
Just as in the midst of a multitude of people
Magicians emanate forms.
Projecting various horse and ox-drawn carts,
But these are indeed false and do not appear at all.
One should similarly know all things.
Just as the moon arises in a clear sky
And its reflection appears on a clear ocean
But the moon of water is an empty and coreless formation.
One should similarly know all things.
Just as when exposed to the summer sun
Creatures are tormented by thirst
And travellers perceive a mirage

In which a mass of water moves
But when investigated there is no water at all.
One should similarly know all things.

And in the Sūtra Requested By Druma (T. 157):

Just as the roundness of one's complexion
Appears on the surfaces of a mirror
But does not independently exist as such.
One should know all things, Druma.

Therefore, one should know that all things appear without independent existence, and from the very moment of their appearance they are a miraculous display, in no way substantially existing.

[The third, (teaching that although the teachers and teachings do not change, for the sake of those to be trained they instruct each according to his or her needs, comments on Ch. 3.17):]

[Read next page]

Text 3.17 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.17]

The Buddhas do not pass Into (final) nirvāṇa.
Their doctrines also do not decline.
In order to instruct the ignorant
Through acts of maturation.
They emerge and then demonstrate
The passing into nirvāṇa. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

sangs-rgyas mya-ngan yong mi-'da' /
chos-kyang nub-par mi-'gyur-te /
ma-rig smin-mdzad 'dul-ba'i phyir /
byung-nas mya-ngan 'da'-bar ston / [17]

Commentary:

[Teaching that although the teachers and teachings do not change, for the sake of those to be trained they instruct each according to his or her needs]

The Buddhas (sangs-rgyas) in whom the two kinds of benefit are spontaneously present and who have progressed to the conclusive goal, such as Samantabhadra, reside at all times without conjunction or disjunction with respect to the three buddha-bodies. Thus, they do not pass

into final nirvāṇa (mya-ngan yongs mi-'da'). All their doctrines (chos) of excellent teaching also do not decline (kyang nub-par mi-'gyur-te) because they abide in a nature which does not change throughout the three times.

Accordingly the Sūtra of Supreme Golden Light (T. 556-7) says:

The buddhas do not pass into final nirvāṇa.
Their doctrines also do not decline.

The nature of the three buddha-bodies abides constantly and continuously, as is stated in the Sūtra of the Three Buddha-Bodies (T. 283):

The body of reality is the constancy of the essence itself.
The body of perfect rapture is the constancy of its continuum.
And the emanational body is the constancy of its uninterrupted nature.

And in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Because the lord of the doctrine.
Subduer of the demon of death.
Is without Independent existence.
He is constantly the protector of the world.

And in the Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861):

The fields and bodies are radiant like the Wishing-tree;[1]
They are non-conceptual in the manner of the Wish-fulfilling Gem.
They constantly remain to engage in the world
Until living beings have been liberated.

Now the majority of texts hold the body of reality and the body of perfect rapture to be constant; and as for the emanational body, they hold it to be constant only in terms of its reality, which transcends the dichotomy of permanence and impermanence. This is because its appearances which manifest before living beings in the manner of the moon reflected in water do not exist with independent characteristics in the presence of those to be trained. In this way, the three buddha-bodies are without conjunction or disjunction and do not essentially change. However, spontaneously present emanations do come forth from that disposition in the manner of (Śākyamuni who performed) twelve deeds.

In order to instruct the ('dul-ba'i phyir) sentient beings who are ignorant (ma-rig) of the abiding nature through acts of maturation (smin-mdzad) and liberation,[2] the emanational bodies emerge (byung) in conformity with individual perception, and then (nas), after performing acts of benefit, demonstrate the passing into nirvāṇa (mya-ngan 'da'-bar ston).

It says in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Emerging as the seed (of enlightenment)
Within those to be instructed.
As the skillful means which grant instruction.

As the actual training of the seed
Within those to be instructed.

In the (appropriate) places and at (appropriate) times.

The pervasive lord emanates constantly and spontaneously.

And according to the Sūtra of Supreme Golden Light (T. 556-7):

The buddhas, inconceivable transcendent lords,
Tathāgatas and constant buddha-bodies
Reveal the diverse forms of their array
In order to benefit sentient beings.

[The fourth, (teaching that the natural Secret Nucleus is the emanational basis of all vehicles, comments on Ch. 3, 18):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

sic! zhi-sku. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 66a: zhing-sku.

[2]:

Maturation (smin-pa) and liberation (sgrol) are synonyms respectively for the conferral of empowerment (dbang-bskur) and esoteric instructions (man-ngag).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.18]

The Vinaya, Sūtras, Abhidharma,
Commitments, attainment, accomplishment.
And the Tantras of Buddha-body, speech and mind
Renowned throughout the ten directions
Emanate from the Secret Nucleus. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

'dul-ba mdo-sde chos-mngon-dang /
dam-tshig sgrub-dang grub-pa-dang /
sku-dang gsung-dang thugs-kyi rgyud /
phyogs-bcu rnams-su rab-grags-pa /
gsang-ba'i snying-po las-'phros-te / [18]

Commentary:

[Teaching that the natural Secret Nucleus is the emanational basis of

all vehicles]

The Vinaya ('dul-ba) chiefly reveals the training of superior moral discipline.

It says in the Ornament the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

It is the Vinaya
Because it sets forth downfalls.
The source of negativity,
Its possession and renunciation.
Individuals, the transgression of vows.
And the classification and ascertainment of vows.

The Sūtras (mdo-sde) chiefly reveal the training; of superior mind.

The same text says:

Because they describe situations and characteristics.
And the meaning of the doctrine
They are the Sūtras.

The Abhidharma (chos-mngon-dang) piṭaka chiefly reveals the trainings of superior discriminative awareness.

The same text says:

Because it is manifest or clear.
Because it is repetitive.
Because of its overpowering realisation.
It is the Abhidharma.

The Kriyātantra chiefly reveals the commitments (dam-tshig) of body and speech such as ablutions and cleanliness. The Ubhayatantra concerns attainment (sgrub-pa-dang) of Buddha-hood through the performance of conduct, as in Kriyātantra, and of the view, as in Yogatantra. Yogatantra concerns supreme accomplishment (grub-pa-dang) because it chiefly reveals mental meditation, with the mere assistance of physical and verbal conduct. The tantras of buddha-body (sku-dang) such as the Black Yamāri (T. 469, 473) chiefly reveal the creation stage of skillful means. The tantras of buddha-speech (gamut) such as the Supreme Horse (T. 839) chiefly reveal the perfection stage of discriminative awareness: and (dang) the tantras of (-kyi rgyud) Buddha-mind (thugs) such as the Guhyasamāja (T. 442-3) and the Glorious Śrīheruka (T. 840) chiefly reveal the non-dual nature. All these, which are renowned (rab grags-pa) as genuine doctrines throughout (rnams-su) the immeasurable Buddha-fields of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu), emanate from (las 'phros) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po), the abiding mode or nature of the Great Perfection. This is because the conclusion of all philosophical systems and essential meanings is gathered in the Great Perfection.[1]

The All-Accomplishing King (T. 828) accordingly says:

Generalities are gathered.
Particulars are gathered.
Everything is gathered.
They are gathered in the natural Great Perfection.
This is the very nucleus of all
In which there is nothing that is not gathered.

[The fifth, (teaching that this text itself is the general commentary on all the sūtras and tantras, comments on Ch. 3.19):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Here and in a similar passage below. Ch. 13, pp. 988-996, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa identifies the Guhyagarbha with rdzogs-pa chen-po. On the three piṭakas see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 17bff., and on the classes of tantra, *ibid.* Pt. 4.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.19]

This natural Secret Nucleus
Is definitively established as the source
Of all piṭakas and all Tantras. [19] ...

[Tibetan]

rang-bzhin gsang-ba'i snying-po 'di /
sde-snod kun-dang rgyud-kun-gyi /
'byung-gnas gtan-la nges-par 'bebs / [19]

Commentary:

[Teaching that this text itself is the general commentary on all the Sūtras and Tantras]

This natural Secret Nucleus (rang-bzhin gsang-ba'i snying-po 'di) itself, the abiding nature of all things, is the emanational basis and therefore Indeed the source ('byung-gnas) of all (kun) the three piṭakas (sde-snod) and (dang) of all (kun-gyi) the six classes of tantras (rgyud). Because it is a gathering of the meaningful nucleus, it abides as the ground that is definitively established (gtan-la nges-par 'bebs) and as the object to be so established. This (text) itself is in fact the establishment of everything.

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

The nature of all the piṭakas and all the tantras
Is gathered in this nucleus.
It is the general commentary
On all the Sūtras and Tantras.

[The sixth, (teaching that all things apart from their mere names, words and labels, are non-existent in the abiding nature, comments on Ch. 3.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.20]

Phenomena are merely names which have been applied.
The teachers apply names and words
Corresponding to their meaning
And then give teaching.
But the names and words which are taught
Are without substantiality.
—So they said. [20]

[Tibetan]

chos-rnams ming-du btags-pa tsam /
ston-pas don-dang mthun-phyogs-su /
ming-dang tshig-tu btags-nas bstan /
ston min-tshig-la dngos-po med /
—ces brjod-do [20]

Commentary:

[Teaching that all things apart from their mere names, words and labels, are non-existent in the abiding nature]

All the teachings in which these five vehicles are established and the phenomena (chos-rnams) subsumed in apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, which are the object to be established are actually non-existent. Thus, they are merely names which have been applied (ming-du btags-ba tsam).

There is a sūtra which says:[1]

Subhūti, all things are mere symbols, mere labels. They are not absolute, according to the essential nature.

Who then applies these labels? The teachers (ston-pas) of the gods and human beings, i.e. the buddhas, invent them, corresponding (mthun-phyogs-su) provisionally to the meaning (don-dang) of relative truth with

its mere unimpeded appearances. They apply names and words (ming-dang tshig-tu btags) such as saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, components, sensory bases and activity fields, and then a give teaching (-nas bstan). Their purpose is that the real abiding nature should be intellectually understood. In this way, names and words are applied, but at the very time at which they are taught (ston-pa'i). the names and words (ming-tshig-la) are without substantiality (dngos-po med).

One should know that although all things are given names and words by the intellect, they are themselves indivisible from space and therefore naturally non-existent as names and concepts.

The Sūtra of the King of Contemplation (T. 127) accordingly says:

Just as when children are born to some people
They are given different names.
But if one were to search for these (names)
Inside, outside, or everywhere,
They do not exist.
All things should be similarly known.

So (-ces) they meaningfully said (brjod-do) that all doctrines and phenomena are inexpressible.

[iii. A Synopsis of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa which are Self-Manifestations of Mind and Pristine Cognition (167.1-169.4):]

The third part (of this exegesis, see p. 493) is a synopsis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as self-manifestations of mind and pristine cognition. It includes a description of the cause of this self-manifestation and the actual way in which it occurs.

[The former (comments on Ch. 3.21):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.21]

Then this secret description of these non-dual maṇḍalas of the Tathāgata came forth from the Indestructible Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. [21] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa gnyis-su med-pa'i dkyil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kyi
gsang-ba 'di-nyid / sku-dang gsung-dang thugs-dang yon-tan 'phrin-las rdo-
rje-las phyung-ngo / [21]

Commentary:

Once the nature of all doctrines had been described, then (de-nas) there emerged this ('di) secret description (gsang-ba-nyid) of these (de-dag-nyid-kyi) maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa), where skillful means and discriminative awareness are non-dual (gnyis-su med-pa'i). revealing the self-manifest nature of mind and pristine cognition. It came forth (phyung-ngo) as follows from the indestructible (rdo-rje-las) buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs yon-tan 'phrin-las).

The latter (the actual revelation) has two sections: It reveals the bewildering appearances of sentient beings to be the selfmanifest nature of the mind; and it reveals the appearances of the Buddha-fields to be the self-manifest nature of pristine cognition.

[The first (comments on Ch. 3.22):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.22]

O! The retributions which are the basis of existence
Have emanated from possessive thoughts.

With respect to the six classes:

Birth, cessation, bodies, raptures, abodes,

The cycle of bewilderment which is suffering,

And so forth, are nothing at all.

Other than the nature of erroneous thought. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

a-ho /

srid-rtsa'i nyes-dmigs bdag-tu rtog-las 'phros /

rgyud-drug skye-'gag lus-dang longs-spyod-dang /

gnas-dang sdug-bsngal 'khrul-'khor la-sogs-pa /

log-rtog-nyid-las gzhan-du ci-yang-med / [22]

Commentary:

O! (a-ho) is exclaimed to indicate astonishment at the selfmanifesting

nature of everything. The five components and all the retributions (nyes-dmigs) caused by them, which are, or have become, the basis (rtsa'i) of the three realms of existence (srid) and the diverse bewildering appearances within the situations of saṃsāra, have emanated from (las-'phros) egotistical and possessive thoughts (bdag-tu rtog). With respect to the different perceptions of the six classes (rgyud-drug) of living beings such as the gods: during bewilderment in saṃsāra, there occur birth (skye). death resulting from the cessation ('gag) of the life-force, diverse and distinct bodies (lus-dang), diverse raptures (longs-spyod-dang) such as (the taste of) nectar and sugar-cane, diverse appearances of different lands such as the abodes (gnas-dang) of the gods. the cycle of bewilderment which is the suffering (sdug-bsngal 'khrul-'khor) of change and decay at death, and so forth. The words and so forth (la-sogs-pa) here include within them the perceptions of happiness and neutrality which appear to diverse flesh-coloured beings. All these are nothing at all (ci-yang med) like distinct external objects, other than (-las gzhan-du) the nature (nyid) of erroneous thought (log-rtog), created by the ignorance of these living beings and their propensities, which are dream-like self-manifestations of the bewildered mind.

Accordingly it also says in the Sūtra Which Establishes Recollection (t. 287):

The diverse bodies, raptures, and perceptions
Of happiness and suffering
Are emanated by mind and made by mind.
They are not extraneous at all, apart from mind.
Just as, for example, are dreams.

[The second (revealing the self-manifest nature of pristine cognition, comments on Ch. 3.23):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.23]

The Buddha-mind of emptiness, selflessness,
Primordial knowledge and Intrinsic awareness
Overpowers it through recollection.

Without objective or subjective reference.

It Itself is accordingly none other than

The wondrous buddha-bodies, speech, attributes and fields.

—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged.

[23]

[Tibetan]

stong-nyid bdag-med ye-mkhyen rang-rig thugs /
dmigs-bya dmigs-byed med-par dran-dbang-sgyur /
ngo-mtshar sku-gsung yon-tan zhing-khams-las /
gzhan-na med-de de-nyid de-ltar yin /
—zhes rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o / [23]

Commentary:

[Revealing the self-manifest nature of pristine cognition]

The Buddha-mind (thugs) is the naturally present pristine cognition, which possesses the emptiness (stong-pa-nyid) endowed with all supreme forms of phenomena,[1] and which is the nature of the primordial Buddhahood of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, primordial knowledge (ye-mkhyen) and individual intrinsic awareness (rang-rig). It overpowers (dbang-bsgyur) (erroneous thought) through recollection (dran) of its pristine cognition, without (med-par) the duality of external objects or extraneous objective reference (dmigs-bya) to the phenomena which appear before it, and the internal mind or self of subjective reference (dmigs-byed). Because this overpowering reality is superior to others it is devoid of individual characteristics and is present in none (med-de) other (gzhan-na) direction than (las) the self-manifest nature of the pristine cognition of Buddhahood. It, in fact, includes the wondrous (ngo-mtshar) and marvellous three buddha-bodies (sku), their speech (gsung) of great pristine cognition which appears as the vehicles, the buddha-mind with its two kinds of knowledge, [2] the immeasurable enlightened attributes (yon-tan), the spontaneously accomplished enlightened activity, and the inconceivable Buddha-fields (zhing-khams). This pristine cognition is itself accordingly (nyid de-ltar yin) an inconceivable appearance of buddha-body, fields, activities, and so forth.

As is said in the Marvellous King (NGB. Vol. 2):

Pristine cognition itself appears
As the Buddha-bodies, pristine cognition, Buddha-fields,
Attributes and activities of pristine cognition.
As many as they are.
It is not extraneous but spontaneously present.

All things are therefore not extraneous, apart from being arrayed in this great self-manifesting nature. Such (zhes) were the words (tshig) of the secret (gsang-ba'i) tantra of natural indestructible reality (rdo-rje) which emerged (tu'o).

[iii. Synopsis of the Chapter (169-4-170.1)]

[The third part (see p. 492) is a synopsis or conclusion of this chapter (which comments on Ch. 3.24):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan rnam-pa mchog-dang ldan-pa stong-pa-nyid. This is the description of the continuum of the ground according to the Great Madhyamaka, on which see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 77a-80b.

[2]:

Tibetan thugs mkhyen-pa gnyis. This indicates the pristine cognition which qualitatively knows the view (ji-lta-ba mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes) and the pristine cognition which quantitatively knows phenomena (ji-snyed-pa mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes). See above, pp. 60bff.; also Ch. 1, note 45.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 3.24]

... Through these words, the Tathāgata himself knew that the teachings spoken by countless emanations of the six sages and by all the Tathāgatas are also gathered in these (verses). This completes the third chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, which establishes all dharmas. [24]

[Tibetan]

—zhes-brjod-pas / thub-pa drug-gi sprul-pa grangs-med-pa-dang / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis gsungs-pa yang de-dag-tu 'dus-par de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-kyis mkhyen-to / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las chos thams-cad gtan-la phab-pa'i le'u-ste gsum-pa'o / [24]

Commentary:

[iii. Synopsis of the Chapter (169-4-170.1)]

[The third part (see p. 492) is a synopsis or conclusion of this chapter (which comments on Ch. 3.24):]

Through these words (zhes brjod-pas), the central deity, the original Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyid-kyis), knew that (mkhyen-to) the teachings given in many vehicles by countless emanations of the six sages (thub-pa drug-gi sprul-pa srangs-med-pa), who appear or emanate from this great spirituality, and the teachings spoken by all the Tathāgatas (dang de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis gsung-ba) of the selfmanifesting array, are also (yang) gathered in these (de-dag-du 'dus-par) verses, which reveal the inexpressible nature, the self-manifestation of mind and pristine cognition.

This completes (-o) the exegesis of the third chapter (le'u ste gsum-pa) from (las) the natural Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) Definitive With Respect To The (nges-pa) inexpressible Real (de-kho-na-nyid), which establishes (gtan-la phab-pa) all dharmas (chos thams-cad) of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to appear, but to be the originally pure reality, essentially without independent existence.

The second section (of the actual exegesis of this tantra), indicating how the maṇḍalas of both the peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from that (natural maṇḍala of the ground—see p. 331) has two parts: a teaching on the spontaneously present maṇḍala of peaceful deities (Chs. 4-14), and an exegesis of the maṇḍala in which the wrathful deities emerge (Chs. 15-21).

The former has three aspects, namely: the creation of the maṇḍala of the ground and the granting of empowerment (Chs. 4-10); a teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path (Chs. 11-13); and a eulogy to the resultant nature of buddha-body and pristine cognition (Ch. 14).

The first of these aspects includes both a general teaching on the nature of the three maṇḍalas (of speech, body, and mind; Chs. 4-9) and a particular exegesis of the skillful means through which empowerment is

granted (Ch. 10).

The former (concerning the three maṇḍalas) is threefold: it reveals the maṇḍala of the cloud-mass of syllables which is the causal basis (Chs. 4-5). it reveals the maṇḍala of contemplation which emerges therefrom (Chs. 6-8), and it reveals the maṇḍala of images which are the radiance thereof (Ch. 9).

The first of these sections also comprises both the maṇḍala-array of the cloud-mass of syllables (Ch. 4) and the sequence of attainment which accords with it (Ch. 5).

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Then all the Tathāgatas became of a single Intention, and, in the expanse of indestructible reality which is a mode of great sameness, without straying from the contemplation that all things are primordial Buddha-hood, the so-called "cyclical garland of syllables", through which all things abide simply as nominal syllables, emerged from the indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind. [1]

ĀḤ The steadfast white syllable A
Emanates tiny syllables A
Which radiate and fill the ten directions.
It (re-)absorbs them, and yet remains constant.
Without increase or decrease.
From it, the nominal clusters (of consonants)
All then radiate and blaze forth.
They are emanated and reabsorbed in the same way. [2]
This is the causal basis of pristine cognition
Through which the accomplishments
Of indestructible reality firmly emerge. [3]
A KA KHA GA GHĀ ÑA
CA CHA JA JHA ÑA
ṬA ṬHA ḌA ḌHA ÑA
TA THA DA DHA ÑA
PA PHA BA BHA MA
YA VA RA LA
ŚA ŚA SA HA KṢA
I Ī Ū Ū
E AI O AU [4]

By the emergence of these (syllables), the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems vibrated in six ways, further vibrated, and absolutely vibrated, whereafter all things became mere nominal characteristics. Ho! [5]

Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression. [6]

The syllable A does not objectively refer
To emptiness, non-emptiness, or even to their middle ground.
According to all Buddhas, all things are merely names,
Abiding in the garland of syllables itself. [7]

The syllable A itself, which diversely appears.
Subsumes all things in forty-two
Consonantal and vocalic syllables, beginning with KA—
The manifestly perfect king itself is ascertained. [8]

Astonishing, wondrous and amazing
Is the great miraculous ability.
Or the forty-five syllables
In which all names and words
Are apprehended, without exception.

They propound and reveal great diverse meanings. [9]

Without substantiality, the nature of the syllables, the mind.
Is selflessness, free from extremes and without objective referent.
Yet through a diversity of shapes, colours and names
It emanates and reveals its display in all ways. [10]

Emerging in the ten directions and four times.
The body, speech and mind of the Being of Pristine Cognition,
Which comprise forty-five maṇḍalas.
Are perfected in the syllables from the initial one to KṢA. [11]

The nature of mind is the syllable.
The syllable is without substantial existence. [12]

This nature without objective referent, diverse.
Comprises the great wheels of Buddha-body, speech and mind.
Body, speech and mind summon forth this great miracle
Which is wondrous and amazing. [13]

Written in the expanse by the expanse.
The so-called syllables are thus described: [14]

The initial punctuation mark is the unerring path.
The final punctuation dots are discriminative awareness
Through which names are applied.
The punctuation stroke is great skillful means
Which demarcates phrases. [15]

The syllable A is the uncreated real nature. [16]

THA is the indestructible reality of magical emanation.
ṬA is the apparitional magical emanation.
DA is the wish-fulfilling magical emanation.
DHA is the pure magical emanation.
ṆA is the absolute magical emanation. [17]

THA is the manifestly perfect net.
TA is the secure net.
DA is the illuminating net.
DHA is the embracing net.
NA is the absolute net. [18]

KA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-eye.
KHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-ear.
GA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-nose.
GHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-tongue.
ṆA is the buddha-mind, yet also the destroyer. [19]

CA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-eye.
CHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-ear.
JA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-nose.
JHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-tongue.

ÑA is the buddha-body, yet also the destroyer. [20]

PA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-eye.

PHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-ear.

BA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-nose.

BHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-tongue.

MA is the buddha-speech, yet also the destroyer. [21]

YA is pure with respect to creation.

VA is pure with respect to abiding.

RA is pure with respect to destruction.

LA is pure with respect to emptiness.

ŚA is pure with respect to eternalism.

ṢA is the absence of nihilism.

SA is free from extremes and without self.

HA is Itself without sign. [22]

KṢA is the spirituality of pristine cognition, the buddha-mind.

I is for the gods, numerous as atomic particles.

Ī is for the antigods, numerous as atomic particles.

U is for the human beings, numerous as atomic particles.

Ū is for the animals, numerous as atomic particles.

E is for the tormented spirits, numerous as atomic particles.

AI is for the denizens of hell, numerous as atomic particles. [23]

O is the destroyer of all.

AU is the destructor of all. [24]

This great cyclical mass of syllables

Subsumes the garlands of body, speech and mind.

—So they said. Aho! [25]

Then this secret description of these very maṇḍalas, where the assembled host of Tathāgatas and their queens are without duality, emerged from the indestructible body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities. [26]

Aho! This wheel is a Joyous cloud of

Skillful means and discriminative awareness.

It is the causal basis of the provision of enlightened mind.

Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors.

These wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables.

Not compounded by nature.

Are the compounded indestructible reality

Which discloses the maṇḍalas.

Their commitment to do so is not transgressed—

Dependent are they on the great force

of their accumulated causes and conditions.

Aho! Such are the words of secret indestructible reality which emerged.
[27]

At these words, all the Tathāgatas were transformed into the wheel of syllables. This completes the fourth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the Cyclical Array of the Garland of Syllables. [28]

Introduction 1: (Definition and Nature of the term "syllable")

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[Commentary (170.1-207.2):]

The maṇḍala-array of the cloud-mass of syllables Includes both an overview and interlinear commentary.

[Overview (170.5-176.2)]

This comprises a general teaching and a particular exegesis. The former (170.6-172.2) has three aspects: a verbal definition of the term "syllable"; its characteristic nature; and its classifications.

i. The term "syllable" (Tibetan *yi-ge*) is derived from (the Sanskrit) *akṣara*—a signifying negation and *kṣara* signifying change. Thus a "syllable" is the unchanging essence, which can support the clear revelation of meaning.

Now, in this context sound is held to comprise both syllables and their subsequent representations. The syllables are the attributes of sound in general, which manifest in all their modes to any speaker or listener. The subsequent representations are held to be the forms in which these (sounds) are written down. This is because, when these are read aloud, the syllables with all their modes of sound and meaning are visualised and become manifest.

ii. The characteristic nature (of syllables) is that they are compounded of non-relational conditions and arise as general modes of sound and meaning (which are apprehended) by individual beings.[1]

iii. As for their classification, they comprise sixteen vowels and thirty-four consonants, which are either short, long or diphthong in quantity. The short category includes those verbally quantified in a single syllable such as *KA*. The long category includes those quantified in two (syllables) such as *KĀ*. The diphthongs[2] include those quantified in three syllables, i.e. the heavy sounds such as *AI* and *AU*. Moreover, syllables are also classified into three types or genders—masculine, feminine and neuter.[3]

From where, one may ask, do these syllables emerge? They emerge from the lips, the tongue, the palate, and from within—exemplified (respectively) by *PA*, *CA*, *YA*, and *A*.

Concerning the causal basis for their emergence, it says in the Sword at the Gateway to Language (T. 4295):

The conditions of speech are universally created
By its places of articulation and action.
By conceptual thought, vital energy and their co-emergence,
And by vowels, consonants, and their (symbolic) manifestation.

According to this text, the syllables emerge through these seven causal bases. Explaining each of these individually it continues:

The places of articulation are the basic cause.
Action is the cause for emission (of sound).
Similarly, conceptual thought is the cause which stimulates (sound)

Vital energy is the cause which gives motility to the action.
In the manner of wind which activates trees.
Breath is the coemergence of these.[4]

Which resembles (the coemergence of) life and youth.
Vowels and consonants are the causes
Of the all-pervasive motion (of sound).
And their (symbolic) manifestation or representation
Is said to be the cause through which
Those of equal fortune (perceive them).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the series of twenty-three non-relational propensities (mi-ldan-pa'i 'du-byed) recognised by the Vaibhāṣikas, see above, Ch. 1, p. 419, note 102.

[2]:

Tibetan shin-tu rin-po.

[3]:

See Sambhoṭavyākaraṇa, pp. 133-136, according to which the hard unaspirate series of syllables (KA etc.) along with RA and HA is masculine; the hard aspirate series (KHA etc.) along with LA is neuter; the soft unaspirate series (GA etc.) along with SA is feminine; while the nasal series (NA etc.) along with VA, YA and SA is extreme feminine.

[4]:

I.e. breath (śvāsa) is the coemergence of conceptual thought (vikalpa) and vital energy (vāyu).

Introduction 2: (The Essence, Classification and Purpose of Syllables)

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[Particular exegesis (172.2-176.2) which has three parts: the essence of the syllables; their classification; and their purpose]

i. The essence is that mind-as-such, the originally pure nature, appears in the form of syllables which support the inexhaustible wheels of adornment, i.e. the buddha-body, speech and mind. As to the locations in which it abides: These syllables are present distinctly and dependent on the seminal points within the energy channels in the four centres of individual buddhas and sentient beings.[1] When the colours and attributes (of these syllables) are radiant, the consciousness of living beings is clear and their sense faculties are keen and most illustrious. Conversely, those in whom the forms of the syllables are not radiant are deluded and defective. Through meditation on (the syllables) in the heart-centre and so forth, the colours and attributes of these syllables increase, and indeed cause accomplishment to emerge.

ii. When classified, they comprise the syllables of the energy channels present within the body, the syllables of the deities in their palaces, the syllables which are miraculous emanations, and the syllables of sound which are illustrative.

Concerning the first of these: there are according to the different classes of tantra many ways in which the syllables are said to abide within the centres of the energy channels. in this context (of the Secret Nucleus) the syllables are said to number one hundred and three: In the crown, throat and heart centres respectively there are the three syllables OM, AH, and HŪM. These are then combined with the syllables of the body, speech and mind of the Hundred Enlightened Families, namely, the syllables of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities in the heart-centre, and the syllables of the Fifty-eight Blood-drinkers in the crown centre. Provisionally the six Impure seed-syllables of the six classes of living beings are revealed as the ground to be purified, and the syllables of those deities are explained to be the Inherently pure skillful means. The syllables of the six classes of living beings are respectively A in the crown-centre between the eyebrows, TR in the throat centre, HR in the heart centre, SU in the navel centre, PRE in the secret centre, and DU in each of the soles of the feet. It is explained that the deeds and propensities which differently give rise to the six classes of living beings do so dependent on these (syllables). Thus those six, which are the ground to be purified, and the one hundred and three syllables which purify them are present in the body.[2]

The syllables of the deities in their palaces are visually created, during meditation on the deity, in the different locations of the maṇḍala. The syllables of emanation are the cloud-mass of syllables which comes forth from the body, speech and mind of the buddha-body of perfect rapture and acts on behalf of living beings by a diffusion of many emanations. Finally, the syllables of sound are the different sounds which are expressed during the recitation of mantras.

iii. The purpose (of these types of syllable) is to accomplish their respective goals: The syllables of the energy channels support the buddha-

body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction. The syllables of the deity are the ground for the emanation of different deities, who accomplish the purpose of the pure creation and perfection stages. The syllables of emanation act on behalf of Immeasurable sentient beings; and the syllables of sound are the causal basis for the accomplishment of the secret mantras.

Now, among these syllables, it is from within the syllable A that the others are emanated.

It says in the Sūtra of All Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

A emerges from the expanse.

From the syllable A

The mass of syllables emanates, none excepted.

In this (Secret Nucleus). the consonants are completely present, whereas the vowels are incomplete—subsumed and applied corresponding to the number of the deities. The long (medial) syllable A is subsumed in the punctuation stroke or daṇḍa (shad). The final Aḥ or visarga is subsumed in the punctuation dots (tsheg). The long initial A and the nasalised AM or anusvāra are combined in the syllable O, and then A end O are both subsumed in the syllable OM. The four neuter syllables Ṛ, Ṝ, Ḍ, Ḍ̄ are subsumed in the consonants RA and LA respectively. in this way. (the syllables are reduced to) forty-two. The initial syllable A is the emanational basis for the remainder of the syllables, but when described in the context of syllabic conjunction, it is combined with O and then included in the syllable OM (or AUM).

If one were to ask from which places of articulation (in the deity) these garlands of syllables have emerged, the Precious Tantra of All Gathering (Awareness. T. 831) says:

The five syllables beginning with KA
Are the natural expression of his guttural speech.
The second set of five beginning with CA
Are the natural expression of his tongue,
Which is shaped like a half-moon.
The third set of five beginning with TA
Are the natural expression of the tip of his tongue.
The fourth set beginning with PA
Is explained to emerge from his lips.
The seed-syllable YA, which abides in saṃsāra.
Is derived from the eyebrows of this great being.
The seed-syllable VA, which dispels delusion,
Is derived from the sides of this great being.
The seed-syllable RA, which burns desire.
Is derived from the hips of this great being.
The syllable LA, which subdues thought.
Is derived from the shoulders of this great being.
The syllable ŚA, which purifies signs.
Is derived from the heart-orb
Which spins within his buddha-mind.

The syllable ŚA., which reveals miraculous display.
 Is derived from the light-rays of his wheel-marked hands.
 The syllable SA, which is the source of desire.
 Is derived from the cubit-sized navel of his buddha-body.
 The seed-syllable HA, which burns obscuration.
 Is derived from the light-rays of his wheel-marked feet.
 The syllable KŚA, which is the source of miraculous display.
 Is derived from the nature of his secret centre.
 The two syllables I and Ī are the natural expressions
 Derived from the two eyes of this great being.
 The two syllables U and Ū are natural expressions
 Derived from the two ears of this great being.
 The two syllables E and AI are natural expressions
 Derived from the two feet of this great being:
 And the syllable of the conquerors, AUM,
 Arises from the crown of this great being.

These syllables emanate as a cloud-mass of syllables from the Buddha-body, and they are the seeds from which the maṇḍala is visually created. They naturally abide within the energy channels of sentient beings.

Now, Rong-zoro Paṇḍita has said that (the syllables number) forty-five because, in addition to those forty-two. he separately counts three of the syllables which are present within (the forty-two), namely: the medial I. which is shaped like an elephant's trunk: the long Ā which is shaped like an arrow; and the final punctuation dots or AḤ visarga, which are shaped like the eyes of Maheśvara.[3] There are also some who claim that (there are forty-five) syllables when those of buddha-body, speech and mind are included.[4] In terms of the syllables themselves, the former position is correct, while the latter is indeed held to be correct with reference to the deities. However, in this context (of the Secret Nucleus), these (additional three syllables) are recognised respectively as: the initial punctuation mark (mgo), which introduces the syllables and is shaped like an elephant's trunk; the final punctuation dots (tsheg). shaped like the eyes of a wrathful deity; and the punctuation stroke (shad), which is shaped like an arrow. This concludes the overview.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the presence of these syllables in the body which are said to produce the form of buddhas and sentient beings, see p. 553.

[2]:

On the seed-syllables of the forty-two peaceful deities, see below. Ch. 4, pp. 587-592, and on those of the fifty-eight wrathful deities, see Ch. 16, pp. 1144-1155. As for the six seed-syllables giving rise to the six classes of sentient beings, A corresponds to the gods, SU to the antigods, NR to humans, SU to animals, PRE to tormented spirits, and DU to denizens of hell.

[3]:

In dkon-mchog 'grel. Rong-zom-pa adds these three syllables, their shape corresponding to their Sanskrit representation. kLong-chen-pa's own view, given Immediately below, is that these three shapes indicate three kinds of punctuation mark—introductory, medial and final.

[4]:

I.e. OM, ĀḤ, and HŪṂ.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.1]

Then all the Tathāgatas became of a single Intention, and, in the expanse of indestructible reality which is a mode of great sameness, without straying from the contemplation that all things are primordial Buddha-hood, the so-called "cyclical garland of syllables", through which all things abide simply as nominal syllables, emerged from the indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad dgongs-pa gcig-tu gyur-nas /
mnyam-pa chen-po'i tshul-rdo rje'i dbyings-su / chos thams-cad ye-nas
sangs-rgyas-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-las mi-gYo-bar / chos thams-cad ming-tsam-
du gnas-pa'i yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i 'khor-lo zhes-bya-ba 'di / sku-dang gsung-
dang thugs rdo-rje-las phyung-ngo / [1]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (176.2-207.2)]

The interlinear commentary (on Ch. 4) has three parts: the background motivation; the exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a synopsis of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 4.1):]

Once spirituality had been emanated from the disposition of the spontaneously present ground and the establishment of all things had been revealed, then (de-nas) all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad) of the ten directions and four times became of a single intention (dgongs-pa gcig-tu gyur-nas) with regard to the meaning of primordial Buddha-hood, in whose nature there is a magical display of syllables. And, in the expanse of indestructible reality which is (rdo-rje'i dbyings-su) the nature of great buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities, or a mode of great sameness (mnyam-pa chen-po'i tshul) where all things are indivisible, the so-called (zhes-bya-ba 'di) natural "cyclical garland of

syllables" (yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i 'khor-lo) through which all things (chos thams-cad) originally abide (gnas-pa'i) simply as nominal syllables (ming-tsam-du) without actually existing, emerged from the indestructible buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las phyung-ngo) of the Tathāgata himself. This occurred in order to reveal the meaning of the sameness and Great Perfection of reality, without (mi) straying (gYo-bar) from the contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin-las) that all things (chos thams-cad) of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are primordial Buddha-hood (ye-nas sangs-rgyas-pa'i) in the essence of the syllables.

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (176.6-206.2):]

The second part, the exegesis of the meaning of its words has three sections, namely: a general teaching on the nature of the wheel of syllables; a detailed and distinct exegesis of them in conjunction with their respective deities; and a summary of these two sections.

The first, the general teaching on the nature of the wheel of syllables (177.1-189.1) is threefold: the meditation on the syllables; the emanation of the cloud-mass of syllables; and an exegesis of the nature of the syllables.

[The Meditation On The Syllables (177.2-179.5)]

This includes both the actual meditation and a teaching on its beneficial attributes. The former has three parts, namely the meditation of the creation stage, the meditation of the perfection stage, and the meditation of the rites and feast-offerings which are applied in this context.

[1. The first of these (comments on Ch. 4.2):]

[Read next page]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.2]

ॐ The steadfast white syllable A

Emanates tiny syllables A

Which radiate and fill the ten directions.

It (re-)absorbs them, and yet remains constant.

Without increase or decrease.

From it, the nominal clusters (of consonants)

All then radiate and blaze forth.

They are emanated and reabsorbed in the same way. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

A: rab-tu brtan-gyur a-dkar-las /
shin-tu phra-ba'i a rnam-spro /
phyogs-bcu gang-bar gsal-gyur-nas /
bsdus-kyang 'phel-'grib med-par bstan /
de-las ming-tshogs gsal-'bar kun /
spro-zhing bsdu-ba'ang de-bzhin-no / [2]

Commentary:

[The Meditation On The Syllables (177.2-179.5)]

This Includes both the actual meditation and a teaching on its beneficial attributes. The former has three parts, namely the meditation of the creation stage, the meditation of the perfection stage, and the meditation of the rites and feast-offerings which are applied in this context.

i. The first of these:

From the disposition of one who has gone for refuge, cultivated the enlightened mind, and reflected on emptiness, the syllable AH (A) emerges steadfast (rab-tu brtan) and unwavering on a lotus and moon cushion. in this natural expression, the immaculate white syllable A (A dkar-po) is clear and resplendent. It emanates (-las spro) countless tiny syllables A (shin-tu phra-ba'i A-rnams), white in colour and the size of a hundredth part of a mustard seed, which radiate (gsal-gyur-nas) the form of the syllable A throughout phenomenal existence with their light-rays, and completely fill (gang-bar) all world-systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu). It (re-)absorbs (bsdus) all of them, causing them to vanish in the original syllable A itself; and yet (kyang), this syllable A Itself is instantly equipoised in a disposition that remains constant (brtan), without (med-par) Increase ('phel) or decrease ('grib) in relation to the past. From that (de-las) original syllable A, the thirty-four nominal clusters or consonants (ming-tshogs) beginning with KA, and the vowels or vocalic syllables all then (kun) radiate (gsal) in their syllabic forms, (illuminating) all the sentient beings with light which diffuses in the ten directions; and they blaze forth ('bar) in a single mass of light-rays. Thereafter, they are reabsorbed and vanish into the syllable A; and then, issuing forth again, they are emanated (spro) and reabsorbed (-zhing bsdu-ba'ang) as before, in the same way (de-bzhin-no). Then, once again on sun and moon cushions at the centre of a lotus flower, the seed-syllables from A to KṢA are sequentially arrayed and visually created as the deities. This is the cloud-mass of syllables which forms the causal basis of the creation stage.[1]

ii. The second, (meditation on the perfection stage, comments on same verses as follows:

The deity is radiantly visualised, and, on a lotus and mooncushion in its heart-centre, there is the steadfast white syllable A. It emanates countless syllables A which fill all world-systems of the ten directions. After transforming all sentient beings into the form of the syllables, the syllable A of the heart-centre reabsorbs them, causing them to vanish into itself,

while it remains equipoised in a disposition without increase or decrease. From that A, the surrounding syllables and nominal clusters or consonants are then emanated and reabsorbed in the same way, so that one becomes equipoised in the disposition of reality, where saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are without duality, without increase or decrease. This is the cloud-mass of syllables according to the perfection stage.[2]

iii. The third, (meditation on the rites and feast-offerings which are applied in this context, comments on the same verses as follows):

During the rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath, the syllable A and the nominal clusters or consonants emanate (respectively) in the colours white, yellow, red and dark-blue. Disease and elemental spirits are pacified. The lifespan and merit are enriched. Objects of attainment are summoned and subjugated. Venomous spirits are eradicated. Then (the syllables) are finally equipoised in a disposition without Increase or decrease, as is (explained) in detail in Chapter Five. That is the cloud-mass of syllables through which the rites and feast-offerings are attained.[3]

[The latter section (of the meditation on the syllables discloses the beneficial attributes of this (meditation). It comments on Ch. 4.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Sanskrit utpattikrama. The deities corresponding to these seed-syllables are enumerated below, pp. 587-592.

[2]:

Sanskrit sampannakrama.

[3]:

On these four rites, see below, pp. 783-786, 1258-1264; and on the feast offerings (gaṇacakra). Chs. 11-12.

Text 4.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.3]

This is the causal basis of pristine cognition
Through which the accomplishments
Of indestructible reality firmly emerge. [3] ...

[Tibetan]

'di-ni rdo-rje dngos-grub-kyi /
brtan-'byung ye-shes rgyu-yin-no / [3]

Commentary:

[The latter section (of the meditation on the syllables discloses the beneficial attributes of this (meditation). It comments on Ch. 4.3):]

This ('di) mode of meditation is the causal basis of pristine cognition (ye-shes rgyu-yin-no), through which the nature of all the desired excellent accomplishments (dngos-grub) of Samantabhadra, the indestructible reality (rdo-rje) of the body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas, firmly emerge (brtan-'byung). So it is that all excellent accomplishments, supreme and common, are attained.

There are some who teach that, from (the time when) the syllable A becomes steadfast and as long as it remains constant without increase or decrease, there is but a single syllable, and who teach that that multitude (of syllables) is formed by the nominal clusters or consonants and so forth, which derive from it. In this way, they hold (the syllables) to be auspicious marks whereby the buddha-body of reality and the buddha-body of form are respectively made into the path. This however is but a part of the correct view because the cloud-mass of syllables has to be explained as the ground of everything.[1]

[Emanation of the Cloud-Mass of Syllables 179.5-182.3:]

Secondly (see p. 558), the emanation of the cloud-mass of syllables includes both the emanation of the syllables and the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear.

[i. The former (comments on Ch. 4.4):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As explained above, pp. 552-553. the syllables are held to be the basis of buddha-body, speech and mind, as well as of all sentient beings.

Text 4.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.4]

A KA KHA GA GHĀ ÑĀ
CA CHA JA JHA ÑĀ
ṬA ṬHA ḌA ḌHA ṆĀ

TA THA DA DHA NA
PA PHA BA BHA MA
YA VA RA LA
ŚA ŚA SA HA KṢA
I Ī U Ū
E AI O AU [4] ...

[Tibetan]

a A ka kha ga g + ha nga /
tsa tsha dza dz + ha nya /
Ta Tha Da D + ha Na /
ta tha da d + ha na /
pa pha ba b + ha ma /
ya wa ra la /
sha Sha sa ha /
k + ShaH /
i I u U /
e e o au / [4]

Commentary:

[Emanation of the Cloud-Mass of Syllables 179.5-182.3:]

Secondly (see p. 558), the emanation of the cloud-mass of syllables includes both the emanation of the syllables and the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear.

[i. The former (comments on Ch. 4.4):]

(A) is the source of the syllables and their emanational basis. Therefore, it comes forth as a natural expression which emerges from within (the buddha-body). Just as all elemental forms arise as attributes of the great elements,[1] all syllables indeed arise as attributes of the syllable A. Thus, the ground of speech is the syllable A.

However, through the conditions of speech, the syllable A is also enunciated as three basic (syllables). These include I, which is formed by the upward contraction of the syllable A. and U, which is formed by its downward contraction.[2] Thence, E is formed by the phonetic conjunction of A and I, and O is formed by the phonetic conjunction of A and U. The syllable Ṛ is formed by retroflexion (of A), and the syllable L is formed by lateral action.[3] Each of these vowels is classified into long and short forms, so that there are fourteen vocalic syllables; or sixteen with the addition of the nasalised Aṁ or anusvāra and the aspirated Aḥ or visarga.

Now, (the velar consonants) emerge from the vase of the Buddha-throat: From the contact of this same syllable A with the throat (as a hard unaspirate), KA is formed. When that is slightly lower pitched (zhum) and cerebral contact is made (as a hard aspirate), KHA is formed. When slightly lower pitched than that (as a voiced unaspirate), GA is formed. When that makes contact with the chest (as a voiced aspirate), GHA is formed; and when nasal contact is made, NA is formed.

One should know that the other (classes of consonants) are also calculated in this sequence. The (palatal) syllables CA, CHA, JA, JHA, and ÑA emerge from the buddha-tongue through the contact of this syllable A with the hard palate and the blade of the tongue.[4] The (retroflex) syllables ṬA, ṬHA, ḌA, ḌHA, and ṆA emerge from the tip of the buddha-tongue because they are cerebral (mūrdhānya) sounds derived from the contact of the syllable A with the edge of the palate close to the tip of the tongue.[5] The (dental) syllables TA, THA, DA, DHA, and NA (KA) emerge from the tip of the buddha-tongue and the buddha-teeth because they derive from the contact of the syllable A with the tip of the tongue and the teeth. And, the (labial) syllables PA, PHA, BA, BHA, and MA emerge from the buddha-lips because they derive from the contact of the syllable A with the lips. The particular (alterations of pitch) within these classes are similar to those (of the velars), beginning with KA.

As to the remaining nine (consonants): (The semi-vowel) YA and (the sibilant) ŚA are classified as palatals according to their place of articulation. (The semi-vowel) VA is classified as labial. (The semi-vowel) RA and (the sibilant) ṢA are classified as cerebral (or retroflex). (The semivowel) LA and (the sibilant) SA are classified as dentals. The syllable HA is classified as velar; and the syllable KṢA is included within the velars and the cerebrals. Although they emerge (phonetically) from these (places of articulation), with reference to their emanational modes on behalf of those to be trained, YA emerges from the buddha-eye-brows, VA from the buddha-sides, RA from the buddha-hips, LA from the buddha-shoulders, ŚA from the buddha-heart, ṢA from the wheel-marked buddha-hands, SA from the buddha-navel, HA from the wheel-marked buddha-feet, and KṢA from the secret centre. in all these syllables the sound of A is pervasive, just as the melodious sound of a lute pervades all the tones of a lute—high & low, strong & weak.

Furthermore, the syllables I and Ī emerge from the two buddha-eyes, U and Ū from the two buddha-ears, E and AI from the two buddha-nostrils, and AUM, i.e. O and AU from the crown of the buddha-head.

[ii. The latter, concerning the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear, (comments on Ch. 4.5)]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The distinctive elemental properties of solidity, cohesion, combustion, movement and vacuity are held to derive respectively from the mahābhūta, the "great elements" of earth, water, fire, air and space. The mahābhūta are also identified with the pañcaskandha. See below, pp. 1001-1002.

[2]:

"upward contraction" (Tibetan bkug-pa) and "downward contraction"

(Tibetan smad-pa).

[3]:

"retroflexion" (Tibetan bsgrim-pa) and "lateral action" (Tibetan glod-pa).

[4]:

"hard palate" (Tibetan rkan-gyi dbus) and "blade of the tongue" (Tibetan lce'i dkyil).

[5]:

Tibetan lce'i rtse-mor nye-ba rkan-gyi mthar.

Text 4.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.5]

... By the emergence of these (syllables), the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems vibrated in six ways, further vibrated, and absolutely vibrated, whereafter all things became mere nominal characteristics. Ho!
[5] ...

[Tibetan]

'di-dag phyung-bas / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas-pa / rnam-pa drug-tu gYos / rab-tu gYos / kun-tu gYos-nas / chos thams-cad ming-gi mtshan-nyid-tsam-du gyur-to / hoH / [5]

Commentary:

[ii. The latter, concerning the wondrous extraordinary omens which appear, (comments on Ch. 4.5)]

By the emergence (phyung-bas) of these ('di-dag) syllables from the buddha-body, speech and mind, a great apparitional cloud-mass of syllables vibrated (gYos) slightly throughout all the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas-pa). This occurs in (tu) six ways (rnam-pa drug) of transformation, namely, when the eastern side (of the syllables) is ascendant the western side is low, when the western side is ascendent the eastern side is low, when the southern side is ascendent the northern side is low, when the northern side is ascendant the southern side is low, when their extremes are ascendent their centre is low, and when the centre is ascendent the extremes are low.

Thereby, all appearances were purified in the nature of a reflected image. Then they further vibrated (rab-tu gYos) with moderate strength, so

that all emptiness became radiant as the nature of pristine cognition; and then they absolutely vibrated (kun-tu gYos) in a most intense manner, whereafter (nas) all things (chos thams-cad) of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa became mere nominal characteristics (ming-gi mtshan-nyid tsam-du gyur-to) in the disposition of the non-dual natural Great Perfection, without existing independently in any respect. Because the tathāgata himself supremely rejoiced in these (signs), the exclamation Ho! was uttered to indicate the establishing of (all things) in the disposition of sameness.

[Exegesis of the Nature of the Syllables (182.3-189.1):]

Thirdly (see p. 558), there is the enunciation of the nature of the syllables. It has six sections, namely: a description of the causal basis for the enunciation of the syllables: a teaching that the wheel of the uncreated syllable is the body of reality because all intentions of the buddhas are gathered therein: a teaching that the manifestly perfect syllables are the body of perfect rapture because the forty-two syllables are gathered in the nature of that syllable A; a teaching that the syllables are themselves the emanational body because they are the source of everything, arising as a diverse display; a teaching on the perfect nature of the forty-five maṇḍalas because the intention of the conquerors is gathered in these (syllables): and an exegesis of the sound and meaning of the syllable, through which mind-as-such is without duality of appearance and emptiness.

[i. The first, (the description of the causal basis for the enunciation of the syllables, comments on Ch. 4.6):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.6]

... Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression. [6] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis ched-du brjod-pa 'di-brjod-do
/ [6]

Commentary:

[The description of the causal basis for the enunciation of the syllables]

Once the cloud-mass of syllables had emanated, then (de-nas) all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis) uttered this meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do) concerning the cloud-mass of syllables.

[ii. The second (comments on Ch. 4.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.7]

The syllable A does not objectively refer
To emptiness, non-emptiness, or even to their middle ground.
According to all Buddhas, all things are merely names,
Abiding in the garland of syllables itself. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

a-ni stong-dang mi-stong-gi /
dbu-ma'ang dmigs-su yod-ma-yin /
thams-cad ming-tsam sangs-rgyas kun /
yi-ge 'phreng-ba-nyid-la gnas / [7]

Commentary:

The syllable A (A-ni) does not exist as an extreme emptiness (stong) because, as the source of the syllables, its own apparitional mode is not abandoned. Nor does it refer to non-emptiness (dang mi-stong) because it is without substance or sign. Indeed, it does not (yod ma-yin) objectively refer (dmigs-su) even to their middle ground (dbu-ma'ang), which in this context is said to be the non-duality of these two (extremes). This is because its perspective transcends both appearance and emptiness. So it is that all things are merely names (thams-cad ming-tsam). and apart from that, are without the independent existence which has been attributed, thought, conceptually elaborated, and expressed. According to the Intention of all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas kun), this reality is abiding in (la-gnas) the disposition of the garland of syllables itself (yi-ge 'phreng-ba-nyid). The abiding nature of this (syllable A) is the nature of the spontaneously present buddha-body of reality.

[iii. The third (comments on Ch. 4.8):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.8]

The syllable A itself, which diversely appears.
Subsumes all things in forty-two
Consonantal and vocalic syllables, beginning with KA—
The manifestly perfect king itself is ascertained. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

a-nyid sna-tshogs-par snang-ba'i /
ka la-sogs-pa bzhi-bcu-gnyis /
sgra-yi ming-gis thams-cad bsdus /
mngon-rdzogs rgyal-po de-nyid nges / [8]

Commentary:

The syllable A itself (A-nyid), the source of all syllables, has a nature which diversely appears (sna-tshogs-par snang-ba'i) through conditions in the forms of the syllables. As previously explained, the syllable I emerges through the upward contraction of the basic syllable A, and U emerges from its downward contraction. From these three (basic syllables), E emerges through the conjunction of A and I; and O emerges through the conjunction of A and U; making five vowels in all. Then there is the syllable R which emerges through retroflexion and the syllable L which emerges through lateral action. These (seven) vowels also come to number fourteen through their subdivision into skillful means and discriminative awareness (i.e. long and short forms). Collectively they are known as A-li (the "vowels")—the syllable I clearly Indicative of skillful means and the syllable A clearly indicative of discriminative awareness.

The syllable A may itself be enunciated dependent on the throat, the palate, the tip of the tongue, the teeth, and the lips, giving rise respectively to the syllables KA, CA, ṬA, TA, and PA. When these sounds are then hardened (or aspirated)[1] they emerge respectively as KHA, CHA, ṬHA, THA, and PHA. When softened (or voiced)[2] they emerge respectively as GA, JA, ḌA, DA, and BA; and when these are voiced with aspiration[3] they emerge respectively as GHA, JHA, ḌHA, DHA and BHA. Then, when nasalised, they emerge respectively as ṆA, ṆA, ṆA, NA, and MA; making five phonetic categories in all. in conformity with these, YA and ṢA are palatal, RA and ṢA are retroflex, LA and SA are dental, VA is labial, HA is velar, and KṢA is cerebral.

Through its contact with the throat and so forth, the sound of the syllable A subsumes all things (thams-cad bsdus) that can be expressed in the forty-two (bzhi-bcu gnyis) consonantal & vocalic syllables (sgra-yi ming-gis) of the alphabet (ā-li kā-li), beginning with KA (KA-la-sogs-pa). The uncreated syllable A is the king (rgyal-po) of primordial manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs) enlightenment, the attainment of Buddhahood in the body of reality. Thus, Just as A is the attainment of Buddhahood, the nature of the forty-two syllables which emanate from the disposition of A itself is (de-nyid) also ascertained (nges) to be the attainment of Buddhahood. For, they are a display of that single essence. Actually, the syllable A is the expanse of Samān-tābhadrī, and the forty-two syllables are the forty-two buddhas who emanate from the disposition of that (expanse). It is in accordance with the latter that the syllables are revealed to be the

buddha-body of perfect rapture.

iv. The fourth comprises both a teaching on the syllables as the source of words, and a teaching on the arising of the diverse display of the syllables.

The former (comments on Ch. 4.9):

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan drag-tu bos-pa.

[2]:

Tibetan zhan-du bos-pa.

[3]:

Tibetan cher bos-pa.

Text 4.9 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.9]

Astonishing, wondrous and amazing
Is the great miraculous ability.
Or the forty-five syllables
In which all names and words
Are apprehended, without exception.
They propound and reveal great diverse meanings. [9] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar ya-mtshan-gyi /
'phrul-chen bzhi-bcu-rtsa-lnga'i ming /
tshig-rnams ma-lus 'dzin-pa'i gnas /
sna-tshogs don-chen smra-zhing ston / [9]

Commentary:

iv. The fourth comprises both a teaching on the syllables as the source of words, and a teaching on the arising of the diverse display of the syllables.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.9):]

The cyclical cloud-mass of syllables is astonishing (e-ma-ho) because it abides as the essence, the buddha-body of reality. It is wondrous (ngo-mtshar) because it appears as the natural buddha-body of perfect rapture; and it is amazing (ya-mtshan) because it arises as the spirituality of the emanational body. This is the great miraculous ability (gyi 'phrul-chen) or inconceivable nature comprising the clusters of the forty-five syllables (bzhi-bcu rtsa-lnga'i) where the three diacritics, namely, the initial punctuation mark, the final punctuation dots, and the medial punctuation stroke, are included in addition to the forty-two syllables; and in which all names and words are apprehended without exception (ming tshig-rnams ma-lus 'dzin-pa'i gnas).

When this apprehension occurs, it resembles, for example, the apprehension of atomic particles which are the conclusive nature of form. A material mass is produced from the gathering of atomic particles, and the atomic particles are then apprehended as a mass. Similarly, the conclusive nature of name is the syllable. Syllables are formed which contain a single vowel through phonetic conjunction, and it is through a combination of these that the names of substantial objects such as "pillar" and "vase" are formed. It is through the combination of these in turn that strings of words are without exception formed. So it is that the syllables are the foundation of names and words. Thereby, they propound (smra) and (-zhing) reveal (ston) to others the great (chen) meanings (don) of diverse (sna-tshogs) doctrines belonging to the vehicle. Therefore, the syllables exist primordially as the source of all words and meanings, without exception.

[The latter (comments on Ch. 4.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.10]

Without substantiality, the nature of the syllables, the mind.
Is selflessness, free from extremes and without objective referent.
Yet through a diversity of shapes, colours and names
It emanates and reveals its display in all ways. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

dngos-med yi-ge'i rang-bzhin sems /
bdag-med mtha'-bral mi-dmigs-kyang /
dbyibs-dang kha-dog ming-tshogs-kyis /
rol-pa cir-yang sprul-cing ston / [10]

Commentary:

Without (med) existing as a coarse substantiality (dngos), the nature of the syllables (yi-ge'i rang-bzhin) is the intrinsic, inwardly radiant mind (sems) Itself. It is the selflessness (bdag-med) of individuals and phenomena, the reality free from (bral) all extremes (mtha') of conceptual elaboration, and it is primordially without objective referent (mi-dmigs) in terms of substantial or designated phenomena. Yet (kyang) its apparitional nature is without duality, in the manner of the moon's reflection in water.

The shapes of the syllables appear and abide, without independent existence, in the centres within the energy channels of the buddha-body and of sentient beings. The syllable A is shaped like a yawning lion, the KA is shaped like a flag-waving battlement, and so forth.[1] With respect to their colours also, the vowels are naturally red and the consonants are naturally white. The action of these Internal syllables is such that, by meditation on them, the path of the yogin and the resultant goal are indeed perfected.[2]

Then, in the circumstance of the buddhas, the cloud-mass of syllables through a diversity ([sna]-tshogs-kyis)[3] of shapes (dbyibs-dang), colours (kha-dog), names (ming), and words, emanates (sprul) its display (rol-pa) of emanations in all ways (cir-yang) and (cing) reveals (ston) Immeasurable enumerations of the doctrine, corresponding to the fortune of living beings.

This action of the wheel of syllables is also one which correspondingly acts on benefit of living beings through the mass of its shapes, colours, names and words which are contained within books and their representational syllables. Furthermore, the secret mantras which are formed from these syllables during meditation on the seed-syllables of the deities are also emanations of this wheel of syllables. So it is that the cloudmass of syllables indeed abides in an emanational nature.

[v. The fifth (comments on Ch. 4.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. the shape of the Sanskrit syllables A and KA.

[2]:

On the meditations which connect the syllables with the right and left energy channels (rasanā and lalanā) and their respective colours, see below, pp. 1006-1019-

[3]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, p. 186.3, Interprets tshogs (Ch. a, section 10) as sna-tshogs.

Text 4.11 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.11]

Emerging in the ten directions and four times.

The body, speech and mind of the Being of Pristine Cognition,

Which comprise forty-five maṇḍalas.

Are perfected in the syllables from the initial one to KṢA. [11] ...

[Tibetan]

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir gshegs-pa-yi /
ye-shes sems-dpa'i sku-gsung-thugs/
dkyil-'khor bzhi-bcu-rtsa-lnga-nyid /
yi-ge mgo-nas kṣa-lha rdzogs / [11]

Commentary:

[v. The fifth (comments on Ch. 4.11):]

As for the teaching on the perfection of the forty-five maṇḍalas: Emerging (gshegs-pa'i) for the sake of living beings of the past, future and present in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir), the maṇḍala of the body (sku) of the being of pristine cognition (ye-shes sems-dpa'i) of all the buddhas, naturally present and secret, comprises the body-aspect of buddha-body, the speech-aspect of buddha-body, and the mind-aspect of buddha-body. Each of these aspects also has five subdivisions when two further subdivisions of enlightened attributes and activities are added (to those of body, speech and mind); making fifteen subdivisions (of the body-maṇḍala) in all. Similarly, his speech and mind (gsung-thugs) each have their fifteen subdivisions. These comprise (nyid) the forty-five maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor bzhi-bcu rtse-lnga) of the five enlightened families, which are perfected (rdzogs) in the syllables (yi-ge) from the initial one (mgo-nas) A to KṢA (KṢA-la). the final one. However many subdivisions there are of the maṇḍala of the enlightened family, they are complete and gathered in the wheel of the syllables itself. This is the basis of all maṇḍalas.[1]

In this respect, there are some who in their explanations of the forty-five syllables have not even partially seen this exposition that the enlightened family of the maṇḍala is gathered in the wheel of syllables.[2]

[vi. The sixth (see p. 566) verbally defines the appearance of mind-as-such as the syllables.]

It has three parts, namely: a teaching on the meaning of the uncreated syllable or mind-as-such; the spontaneous presence of enlightened attributes through their appearance as syllables from the disposition of that uncreated nature; and the written representations and arrays of those syllables in which appearance and emptiness are without duality.

[The first (comments on Ch. 4.12):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the manifold clusters of deities who emerge from the basic series, see below, pp. 797-801, 935-944. As the basis of the maṇḍala of deities. It is also known as the jñānasattva.

[2]:

Again, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa emphasises the resultant aspect of the wheel of syllables—its appearance as the fully mature maṇḍala of deities or of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.12]

The nature of mind is the syllable.

The syllable is without substantial existence. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

sems-kyi rang-bzhin yi-ge-ste /
yi-ge dngos-po yod-ma-yin / [12]

Commentary:

[vi. The sixth (see p. 566) verbally defines the appearance of mind-as-such as the syllables.]

It has three parts, namely: a teaching on the meaning of the uncreated syllable or mind-as-such; the spontaneous presence of enlightened attributes through their appearance as syllables from the disposition of that uncreated nature; and the written representations and arrays of those syllables in which appearance and emptiness are without duality.

[The first (comments on Ch. 4.12):]

The nature of mind (sems-kyi rang-bzhin), inner radiance itself, is the syllable (yi-ge-ste) spontaneously present in nature. The syllable (yi-ge) itself is without (yod-ma-yin) substantial (dngos-po) or designated existence.

Accordingly, the Litany of the Mames of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) says:

A is supreme among all seed-syllables.
Emerging from within, the uncreated
Sacred syllable of great meaning,
The supreme causal basis of all expressions,
Illuminates thoroughly all words.

And in a sūtra:[1]

Subhūti, the syllables are ultimately uncreated. They are the essential nature of A. That which is the essential nature of A is the nature of mind. It genuinely transcends all things, substantial and non-substantial.

[The second (comments on Ch. 4.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N. L.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.13]

This nature without objective referent, diverse.
Comprises the great wheels of Buddha-body, speech and mind.
Body, speech and mind summon forth this great miracle
Which is wondrous and amazing. [13] ...

[Tibetan]

dmigs-med de-nyid sna-tshogs-pa'i /
sku-gsung-thugs-kyi 'khor-lo che /
sku-gsung-thugs-ni ngo-mtshar-gyi /
ya-mtshar 'phrul-chen rab-'gugs-pa'o / [13]

Commentary:

This nature (de-nyid), or syllable which is the ultimate mind-as-such, is without objective referent (dmigs-med) because of its diverse (sna-tshogs-pa'i) elements of inner radiance. It comprises the great wheel ('khor-lo che) of supportive buddha-body (sku), the great wheel of grammatical buddha-speech (gsung), and the great wheel of equipoised buddha-mind (thugs-kyi), along with the wheel of omniscient enlightened attributes and the great wheel of unimpeded enlightened activities. These natural inexhaustible wheels of adornment—the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of all the buddhas themselves—illuminate in oneself and

summon forth (rab-'gug-pa'o) this great miracle ('phrul-chen) which is wondrous (ngo-mtshar-kyi) because their excellent enlightened attributes are primordially and spontaneously present, and amazing (ya-mtshan) because it is the intention of supreme buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction. The point is that through meditation the three buddha-bodies indeed arise in oneself.

[The third (comments on Ch. 4.14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.14]

Written in the expanse by the expanse.

The so-called syllables are thus described: [14] ...

[Tibetan]

dbyibs-la dbyibs-kyis bris-pa-ste /
yi-ge zhes-ni de-phyir brjod / [14]

Commentary:

The syllables which actually appear as such are written (bris-pa ste) primordially in (la) the disposition of mind-as-such, the unchanging expanse (dbyings) of primordially pure reality by the expanse (dbyings-kyis) of pristine cognition, spontaneously present and effortless. The so-called syllables (yi-ge zhes-ni), which are a name for the never-changing naturally radiant reality, have not been and are not newly fabricated. Thus (de-phyir) they are described (brjod) as the cyclical cloud-mass of spontaneous syllables in which all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa primordially and effortlessly abide.

[Detailed and Distinct Exegesis of the Syllables in Conjunction with their Respective Deities (189.1-202.2)]

The second section (of the exegesis of the meaning of the words—see p. 558) is a detailed and distinct exegesis (of these syllables) in conjunction with their respective deities. It has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the meaning of the (first) three syllables; a detailed exegesis on the meaning of the forty-two syllables; and a synopsis.

[i. General Teaching on the Meaning of the First Three Syllables (189.2-191.5):]

[This (comments on Ch. 4.15):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.15]

The initial punctuation mark is the unerring path.

The final punctuation dots are discriminative awareness

Through which names are applied.

The punctuation stroke is great skillful means

Which demarcates phrases. [15] ...

[Tibetan]

mgo-ni ma-nor lam-yin-te /

tig-ni shes-rab ming-du smra /

shad-ni thabs-chen tshigs-su gcod / [15]

Commentary:

[Detailed and Distinct Exegesis of the Syllables in Conjunction with their Respective Deities (189.1-202.2)]

The second section (of the exegesis of the meaning of the words—see p. 558) is a detailed and distinct exegesis (of these syllables) in conjunction with their respective deities. It has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the meaning of the (first) three syllables; a detailed exegesis on the meaning of the forty-two syllables; and a synopsis.

[i. General Teaching on the Meaning of the First Three Syllables (189.2-191.5):]

[This (comments on Ch. 4.15):]

The initial punctuation mark (mgo-ni) which precedes the syllables is drawn in the shape of a staff (ber-ka-ris) and exemplified by the nose-shaped syllable I.[1] It is the unerring (ma-nor) indestructible reality of buddha-mind which reveals the meaning of skillful means and discriminative awareness without duality. in the manner of a wagon-driver, it activates the path (lam) because it is the leading or Initial (mark) which precedes all the syllables of the texts and so forth.

The final punctuation dots (tig) or tsheg which accompany each syllable resemble the eyes of Maheśvara, as in the syllable AḤ. They are the nature of nirvāṇa in which signs are quiescent, the discriminative awareness (shes-rab) indicative of the indestructible reality of inexpressible buddha-speech which does not abide in the two extremes. The form of that syllable AḤ conveys the sense of the perfection of discriminative awareness, and its action is one through which names are

(ming-du) differentiated and applied (smra) to objects. If each syllable A were not demarcated (by the dots), no consonantal syllables, demarcated by a single vowel, would be formed: and if these were not formed the names of objects such as "pillar" and "vase" would not be formed. Therefore in this context the action (of the dots) is to form the names of different objects.

The punctuation stroke (shad-ni) which accompanies the syllables, shaped like the syllable A in the form of a straight arrow (I), is the great (chen) miracle of skillful means (thabs), the indestructible reality of buddha-body which indicates that living beings are protected by great spirituality. its action is one which demarcates phrases (tshigs-su gcod) out of distinct syllables.

In this context, there are those blind to all the meanings of the well-structured treatises, thoroughly ignorant of the nature of the textual traditions of the Sūtras and Tantras, who profess this to be an imperfect mode (of explanation), saying, "It is incorrect for you to speak of the initial punctuation mark, the punctuation dots and stroke. Because they are absent in the Sanskrit books they were created by the Tibetans". It should be explained (in response to this argument) that, although you were born in Tibet, you have not seen the texts of the great Tibetan piṭakas: and even though you have been to India, you have not thoroughly studied the well-composed (Indian) treatises or seen the books preserved in different provinces, according to each of which these (three punctuation features) are authentic. The accuracy of this statement is also to be pinpointed to some extent by literary transmissions:

It says in the Sūtra Requested by Śrīdatta (T. 77):

The initial punctuation mark indicates the beginning.
As the head-letter, it should be elegantly drawn.
Because it is at the head of the syllables
It is said to be in front.
In the design of a staff.

And in the Sūtra at the Invitation of Bimbisāra (T. 289):

The first of the syllables is a dot.
Among the forty-two syllables.
The unerring path is the punctuation dot.
Thus one who knows the path
Arrives at the syllables from that dot.

And in the Sūtra Requested by Ugra (T. 63):

The punctuation point gives form to words.
By syllabic conjunction names are applied
And the essential meaning is easily examined.
So it is that it is called the punctuation point or dot.

And in the Holy Ornament (P. 4735):

Because they gather (syllables) together.
The points are punctuation dots
Which apply names by drawing dispersed (syllables) together.
When these have the action of a full stop[2]
They appear in form of the punctuation stroke.

And in the Sūtra Requested by Subāhu (T. 805):

Without neglecting the four vowels I U E O (gug-skyed) and the anusvāra circle (klad-skor), or the final punctuation dots (visarga)...

Thus, such genuine transmitted precepts have indeed been passed down in Tibet.

The malign disputations (mentioned above) are the controversies of those who depreciate (the teaching), totally ensnared by the unbearable darkness of jealousy. Since their comments actually have no foundation (in the texts) they do not even merit rejection at this juncture.

The Ascertainment of Valid Cognition (T. 4211) appropriately says:

Because the erroneous paths are inconclusive
They should not be elaborated here.

However, (this statement of mine) has been set forth in order to clarify certain doubts to some extent. Those (erroneous) ideas naturally occur because the intellect is more foolish than Māra and the extremists who debated with the Transcendent Lord, than malicious guard-dogs who even inflicted pain on a universal monarch, or than the cowherds who scorned the nature of the Omniscient One. The Intellect Indeed conforms with the saying, "The herdsman is worse than the beast!"[3]

[Exegesis on the Meaning of the Forty-Two Syllables (191.5-201.6):]

The second, (the exegesis on the meaning of the forty-two syllables), includes an overview and interlinear commentary.

The former (191.5-197.3) has three parts: the implication of (the syllables) being out of order; an explanation of the symbolic meaning of their names; and a description of the glow (of the deities) which arises (from these syllables).

[i. As to the first:]

Although in this chapter of the text the sequence of the syllables appears to be somewhat out of order, the present sequence does refer to the abiding nature of the respective deities. Now, the Initial syllable A is the nature of emptiness, the expanse of reality or Samantabhadri; and the syllable KṢA, which follows those of the four female gatekeepers, is the essence of appearance, the pristine cognition or Samantabhadra. These two are the glowing male and female consorts Samantabhadra (dangs-kyi kun-bzang yab-yum). Here they are not said to be in union, but they are explained to be the first and the last (of the deities in the maṇḍala), with

the exception of the six sages. The purpose is to reveal that the self-manifesting buddha-bodies of perfect rapture are a display which arises from the disposition of Samantabhadra, the very ground where appearance and emptiness are without duality. Now mind-as-such or the inner radiance of the ground is the original Samantabhadra, the conclusive ground of liberation. Its apparitional and emptiness aspects are respectively the glowing male and female consorts Samantabhadra, in this way the body of perfect rapture is revealed to arise, manifest in and of itself, from the disposition of inner radiance, the body of reality.

The seed-syllables of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families are then revealed because, from the disposition of reality, the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families, pure and self-manifesting, abide within the maṇḍala in the manner of rainbow colours.

Then the seed-syllables of the four inner male spiritual warriors are revealed in order to indicate that the four male spiritual warriors of buddha-mind arise from the mental energy of these deities. Then the seed-syllable of Yamāntaka is revealed from the glow of these four male spiritual warriors of buddha-mind in order to illustrate that through their apparition they subdue the obscuration of the knowable, which clings to the mind defiled by conflicting emotions. Then, the seed-syllables of their consorts are revealed, illustrating that the four objects which are the perceptual range of these spiritual warriors appear as their respective female consorts. Then Mahābala appears from the energy of these (consorts) and his seed-syllable is revealed in order to illustrate that they subdue the obscuration of conflicting emotions, which clings to these four objects of appearance.

Furthermore, from the energy of the buddha-speech of the five basic enlightened families, the four spiritual warriors of buddha-speech appear and reveal their seed-syllables. Then, Hayagrīva arises and reveals his seed-syllable to illustrate that obscurations of speech are subdued by this buddha-speech. The four female spiritual warriors of time who are the apparitional objects appraised by these (male spiritual warriors) also appear throughout the four times as unobscured buddha-speech, so that the seed-syllables of these four female consorts are revealed. Then, the seed-syllables of the four female gatekeepers are revealed because the four female gatekeepers also appear, illustrating that the nature of these (female spiritual warriors) transcends the stains of the four extremes.[4]

Then, as previously indicated, there is the syllable KṢA which reveals that all these apparitional images arise from the disposition of Samantabhadra.

Then, from the energy of the buddha-body of these deities, the six sages appear in their respective world-systems and their seed-syllables are revealed. Illustrating that their emanational nature is endowed with excellent enlightened activities. The seed-syllable of Amṛtakuṇḍalin is then revealed because he appears from the glowing enlightened activity of the central deity, from whose nature of buddha-body this enlightened activity arises. Then, in order that the Buddha-field of the wrathful deities might be self-manifestingly revealed from the glow of all these (deities),

the seed-syllable of Buddha Heruka is finally revealed as its essence, illustrated by the syllable AUM.

[ii. As for the explanation of the symbolic meaning of the syllables:]

The symbolic meanings of the "uncreated nature" and of the "buddha-mind" describe respectively the female & male consorts Samantabhadra (kun-bzang yab-yum). From their disposition of the expanse or uncreated mind-as-such and of pristine cognition which reveals naturally present unimpeded spirituality, the maṇḍalas are understood to have their arising ground. The male consorts of the five enlightened families are (symbolically) described by the term "Magical" (sgyu-'phrul); for they reveal the magical nature of skillful means according to which the five self-manifesting components are inherently pure. The five female consorts are (symbolically) described by the term "Net" (dra-ba), illustrating that they are associated with nondual discriminative awareness, and revealing the five elements to be pure in the expanse. The four inner male spiritual warriors are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-mind" (thugs). Illustrating that the nature of consciousness is purity. The four female spiritual warriors who are their objects are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-body" (sku). Illustrating that the apparitional objects which arise to the sense-organs and coarsely appear are Inherently pure. The four outer male spiritual warriors are (symbolically) described by the term "buddha-speech" (gsung). Illustrating that the sense-organs are clear and the selves which are conceived are inherently pure. The four female spiritual warriors of time are (symbolically) described by the term "pure" (dag-pa). Illustrating that all the four times are inherently pure—transcending existence, nonexistence, eternalism and nihilism. The four male gatekeepers are (symbolically) referred to by the term "destroyer" ('jig-pa). They symbolise the subjugation and Inherent purity of the four kinds of Māra and their disputations, i.e. the nature of conflicting emotion which apprehends substances and signs. The four female gatekeepers are (symbolically) depicted by terms which mean "reality" (chos-nyid), [5] illustrating that the benefit of living beings is spontaneously accomplished through the primordially pure immeasurables, and that the possessor subject, possessed objects, and the apprehension of signs are inherently pure. The six sages are (symbolically) described by the term "numerous as atomic particles" (rdul-snyed), illustrating that they accomplish spontaneous acts of benefit in limitless worlds through countless emanations, and that the propensities of the six classes of living: beings are inherently pure. Then, the nature of the wrathful deities is (symbolically) described by the term "destructor of all" (thams-cad zhig-pa), illustrating that arrogant beings to be trained are disciplined and apparitional objects are pure in pristine cognition.

[iii. As for the glow (of the deities) who arise (from these syllables):]

In the self-manifesting spontaneous Bounteous Array of the buddhas, the central deity's visage is beheld from whatever direction (of the maṇḍala) it is perceived. in the eastern direction there are the male and female consorts Akṣobhya with their six-deity maṇḍala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Kṣitigarbha, Maitreya, Lāsyā, and Dhūpā, with the gatekeepers Yamāntaka and Aṅkuṣā further to the east. In

the southern direction there are the male and female consorts Ratnasambhava with their six deity maṇḍala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Avalokiteśvara, Nivāraṇaṣṭakambhin, Mālyā, and Puṣpā, with (the gatekeepers) Mahābala and Pāśā further to the south. In the western direction there are the male and female consorts Amitābha with their six-deity maṇḍala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Ākāśagarbha, Samantabhadra, Gītā and Ālokā, with (the gatekeepers) Hayagrīva and Sphoṭā further to the west. In the northern direction there are the male and female consorts Amoghasiddhi with their six-deity maṇḍala which comprises the four encircling (spiritual warriors) Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Nartī and Gandhā, with (the gatekeepers) Amṛtakuṇḍalin and Gaṇṭhā further to the north.

From the glow of natural radiance in these six-fold maṇḍalas it is held that the Buddha-fields of the wrathful deities and of the countless emanations of the six sages become present in the zenith and nadir respectively, in a continuous perpetual cycle, emanating in a self-manifesting manner in all world-systems.

It says in the Tantra of the Precious Gems of Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rin-po-che'i rgyud):

In the Buddha-field of the Bounteous Array
The self-manifesting Buddha-body of perfect rapture
Is surrounded by six retinues of six (deities).
It emanates continuously as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities
And as the countless sages, who are its glow.
Similarly, it constantly abides in living beings.

Within sentient beings also. (these deities) are held to be sustained in the heart-centre and in the crown-centre.

The Tantra of the Coalescence of Sun and Moon (NGB. Vol. 9) says:

In the precious celestial palace of the heart
The bodies of the peaceful deities are perfectly present.
And in each Individual crown centre
They radiate as the bodies of the wrathful deities.
The glowing buddha-bodies are inconceivable.

Subsequently, during the bar-do or intermediate state, these buddha-bodies arise sequentially in their maṇḍala-clusters over five days of meditative concentration.[6]

It is said in the Intention of the Nucleus of Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag snying-gi dgongs-pa):

During the bar-do, the buddha-body arises along with its six (maṇḍala-clusters).

Now, this tantra-text (the Secret Nucleus) is said to belong to the secret Great Perfection which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be self-manifesting. Because the higher teachings are gathered together within

it, one may appropriately consider it in accordance with the Cycle of the Seminal Point (thig-le'i skor) which belongs to the Great Perfection.[7] The present account set forth herein has been compiled from the great writings of the esoteric instructions which were composed by the great master Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra as the means for attaining the peaceful and wrathful deities.[8] This overview is most secret and precious. It is the conclusive intention of this Tantra-text.

[The interlinear commentary (concerning the forty-two syllables—197.3-201.6) is as follows:]

Although there is no contradiction when (the syllables) are classified as before according to their respective phonetic categories, (here) they are actually explained out of order with the result that it is not easy for the expositor to explain them and it is hard for the listener to understand them. The sequence of the syllables should therefore be revealed in five stages: the syllable of the expanse along with those of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families; the syllables of the Inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllables of the outer spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllable of pristine cognition along with those of the sages; and the syllables of the protectors of the gates with those of the wrathful deities.

[i. The first has three aspects, namely, the syllable of Samantabhadri the expanse, the syllables of the male consorts of the five enlightened families, and the syllables of their female consorts. The first (comments on Ch. 4.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On this initial punctuation mark, see Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*. p. 154, where three aspects are considered—its symbolic representation in the shape of a staff, its purpose which is to illustrate the non-dual pristine cognition, and its action which resembles a pathway in that it precedes all the syllables.

[2]:

Tibetan gcod-par byed-pa'i las-can.

[3]:

Tibetan phyugs-pas-kyang phyugs yin.

[4]:

The four extremes of eternalism, nihilism, selfhood, and substance. See below, pp. 590-591.

[5]:

Among these symbolic appellations of the deities, "reality" (chos-nyid) indicates the emptiness behind phenomena rather than its appearances. See above, pp. 138-139. notes 40, 43.

[6]:

This after-death experience of the chos-nyid bar-do is discussed in e.g., the translations of the bar-do thos-grol, which Indicates that the five days correspond to the deities of the five enlightened families. See above, p. 129, note 1, and also below. Ch. 13, PP. 1039-1040.

[7]:

I.e. the thod-rgal instructions of rdzogs-pa chen-po, which fuse together all instructions of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. See below. Ch. 13, pp. 1022-1044.

[8]:

in particular these instructions refer to Padmasambhava's mkha'-'gro snying-thig and Vimalamitra's bi-ma snying-thig contained in kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's own compilation, the snying-thig ya-bzhi (vols. 2-3 and 7-9 respectively), as well as to their Mahāyoga based commentaries in Peking bsTan-gyur. Vol. 83.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.16]

The syllable A is the uncreated real nature. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

a-ni skye-med de-bzhin-nyid / [16]

Commentary:

[The interlinear commentary (concerning the forty-two syllables—197.3-201.6) is as follows:]

Although there is no contradiction when (the syllables) are classified as before according to their respective phonetic categories, (here) they are actually explained out of order with the result that it is not easy for the expositor to explain them and it is hard for the listener to understand them. The sequence of the syllables should therefore be revealed in five stages: the syllable of the expanse along with those of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families: the syllables of the Inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllables of the outer spiritual

warriors along with their gatekeepers; the syllable of pristine cognition along with those of the sages; and the syllables of the protectors of the gates with those of the wrathful deities.

[i. The first has three aspects, namely, the syllable of Samantabhadri the expanse, the syllables of the male consorts of the five enlightened families, and the syllables of their female consorts. The first (comments on Ch. 4.16):]

The syllable A (A-ni) is the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) in which all things are uncreated (skye-med). It is the essence of Samantabhadri, the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness.

It says in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

In this respect, the so-called syllable A is the approach to all things because it is uncreated from the beginning.

Texts such as the latter are identical in their explanation of the forty-two syllables.

[The second (comments on Ch. 4.17):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.17]

ṬHA is the indestructible reality of magical emanation.

ṬA is the apparitional magical emanation.

ḌA is the wish-fulfilling magical emanation.

ḌHA is the pure magical emanation.

ṆA is the absolute magical emanation. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

T + ha-ni sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje-nyid /

Ta-ni snang-ba'i sgyu-'phrul-nyid /

Da-ni sgyu-'phrul yid-bzhin-nyid /

D + ha-ni sgyu-'phrul rnam-dag nyid /

Na-ni kun-tu sgyu-'phrul nyid / [17]

Commentary:

ṬHA (ṬHA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Vairocana, who is the real nature, the indestructible reality of (rdo-rje-nyid) consciousness or the buddha-mind. This is because, without arising from the expanse, his essential nature of diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) appears as skillful

means, i.e. a way into the comprehension of the real nature of consciousness. TA (TA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Akṣobhya, the diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul-nyid) whose skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of form is apparitional (snang-ba'i). DA (DA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Ratnasambhava, the wish-fulfilling (yid-bzhin-nyid) magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) who diversely manifests skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of feeling. DHA (DHA-ni) is the pure (rnam-dag-nyid) seed-syllable of Amitābha, the diversified magical (sgyu) emanation ('phrul) of skillful means for comprehension of the real nature of perception. NA (NA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Amoghasiddhi, the magical emanation (sgyu-'phrul-nyid) absolute (kun-tu) with respect to time, i.e., the nature of skillful means for comprehension of the reality of habitual tendencies.

[The third (comments on Ch. 4.18):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.18]

THA is the manifestly perfect net.

TA is the secure net.

DA is the illuminating net.

DHA is the embracing net.

NA is the absolute net. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

tha-ni dra-bas mngon-rdzogs-nyid /

ta-ni dra-bas brtan-pa-nyid /

da-ni dra-bas lhan-me-nyid /

dha-ni dra-bas 'khril-ba-nyid /

na-ni dra-ba kun-tu 'gyur / [18]

Commentary:

[The third (comments on Ch. 4.18):]

THA (THA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Ākāśadhātviśvarī, the manifestly perfect net (dra-ba mngon-rdzogs-nyid) of enlightenment who combines skillful means and discriminative awareness without duality in her nature of space. TA (TA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Buddhalaṅkā, the secure net (dra-ba brtan-pa-nyid) of discriminative awareness. DA (DA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, the illuminating (lham-me-nyid) light-rays of the net (dra-ba) of pristine cognition. DHA (DHA-ni) is the seed-syllable of Māmākī, the embracing net (dra-ba 'khril-ba) of reality. NA (NA-ni) is ('gyur) the seed-syllable of Samayatārā, the net (dra-ba) of real nature

which is absolutely (kun-tu) beautiful.

ii. The syllables of the inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise both the syllables of the four male spiritual warriors who are the consciousnesses of the senseorgans along with the gatekeeper of buddha-mind, and the syllables of the four female spiritual warriors who are their sense-objects along with the gatekeeper of buddha-body.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.19):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.19]

KA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-eye.

KHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-ear.

GA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-nose.

GHA is the supreme buddha-mind of buddha-tongue.

NA is the buddha-mind, yet also the destroyer. [19] ...

[Tibetan]

ka-ni spyan-gyi thugs-kyi mchog /
kha-ni snyan-gyi thugs-kyi mchog /
ga-ni shangs-kyi thugs-kyi mchog /
gha-ni ljags-kyi thugs-kyi mchog /
na-ni thugs-kyang 'jig-byed-pa'o / [19]

Commentary:

ii. The syllables of the inner spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise both the syllables of the four male spiritual warriors who are the consciousnesses of the senseorgans along with the gatekeeper of buddha-mind, and the syllables of the four female spiritual warriors who are their sense-objects along with the gatekeeper of buddha-body.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.19):]

KA (KA-ni) is the syllable of the supreme (mchog) Kṣitigarbha, the buddha-mind of buddha-eye (spyan-gyi thugs-kyi) who purifies the consciousness of the eye in the expanse. KHA (KHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Vajrapāṇi, the buddha-mind of buddha-ear (snyan-gyi thugs-kyi) who purifies the consciousness of the ear. GA (GA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Ākāśagarbha, the buddha-mind of buddha-nose (shangs-kyi thugs-kyi) who purifies the consciousness of the nose. GHA (GHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Avalokiteśvara, the buddha-mind of buddha-tongue (ljags-kyi thugs) who purifies the consciousness of the

tongue. NĀ (NĀ-ni) is (the syllable of) the gatekeeper Yamāntaka, the buddha-mind (thugs) who apprehends those consciousnesses of the sense-organs, and yet also (kyang) is the destroyer ('jig-byed-pa'o) who purifies attachment to the three media (of body, speech and mind).

[The latter (comments on Ch. 4.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.20]

CA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-eye.

CHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-ear.

JA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-nose.

JHA is the supreme buddha-body of buddha-tongue.

NĀ is the buddha-body, yet also the destroyer. [20] ...

[Tibetan]

ca-ni spyan-gyi sku-yi mchog /

cha-ni snyan-gyi sku-yi mchog /

ja-ni shangs-kyi sku-yi mchog /

jha-ni ljags-kyi sku-yi mchog /

ñā-ni sku'ang 'jig-byed-pa'o / [20]

Commentary:

CA (CA-ni) is (the syllable of) the supreme (mchog) Lāsyā, the buddha-body of buddha-eye (spyan-gyi sku-yi) who is pure form. CHA (CHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Gītā, the buddha-body of buddha-ear (snyan-gyi sku-yi) who is pure sound. JA (JA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Mālyā, the buddha-body of buddha-nose (shangs-kyi sku-yi) who is pure fragrance. JHA (JHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Nartī, the buddha-body of buddha-tongue (ljags-kyi sku-yi) who is pure taste. NĀ (NĀ-ni) is revealed as (the syllable of) Mahābala, the wrathful deity of buddha-body who is the buddha-body (sku), and yet also (yang) the destroyer ('jig-byed-pa'o) who purifies grasping apprehension with respect to these objects and the three media (of body, speech and mind).

iii. The syllables of the outer spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise those of the four male spiritual warriors of the sense-organs with their gatekeeper of buddha-speech, and the four female spiritual warriors of time with their female gatekeepers.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.21):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.21]

PA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-eye.

PHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-ear.

BA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-nose.

BHA is the supreme buddha-speech of buddha-tongue.

MA is the buddha-speech, yet also the destroyer. [21] ...

[Tibetan]

pa-ni spyan-gyi gsung-gi mchog /
pha-ni snyan-gyi gsung-gi mchog /
ba-ni shangs-kyi gsung-gi mchog /
bha-ni ljags-kyi gsung-gi mchog /
ma-ni gsung-yang 'jig-par-byed / [21]

Commentary:

iii. The syllables of the outer spiritual warriors along with their gatekeepers comprise those of the four male spiritual warriors of the sense-organs with their gatekeeper of buddha-speech, and the four female spiritual warriors of time with their female gatekeepers.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.21):]

PA (PA-ni) is the syllable of the supreme (mchog) Maitreya, the buddha-speech of buddha-eye (spyan-gyi gsung-gi), the inherently pure organ of the eye. PHA (PHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin, the buddha-speech of buddha-ear (snyan-gyi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the ear. BA (BA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Samantabhadra, the buddha-speech of buddha-nose (shangs-kyi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the nose. BHA (BHA-ni) is that of the supreme (mchog) Mañjuśrī, the buddha-speech of buddha-tongue (ljags-kyi gsung-gi) who is the pure organ of the tongue. MA (MA-ni) is (the syllable of) Hayagrīva, who is the buddha-speech (gsung), and yet also (yang) the destroyer ('jig-par-byed) who purifies egotism and attachment to the three media (of body, speech and mind).

[The latter (comments on Ch. 4.22):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.22]

YA is pure with respect to creation.

VA is pure with respect to abiding.

RA is pure with respect to destruction.

LA is pure with respect to emptiness.

ŚA is pure with respect to eternalism.

ŚA is the absence of nihilism.

SA is free from extremes and without self.

HA is Itself without sign. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

ya-ni skye-ba rnam-par dag /
va-ni gnas-pa rnam-par dag /
ra-ni 'jig-pa dag-pa-ste /
la-ni stong-pa dag-pa'o /
śa-ni rtag-pa dag-pa-ste /
ṣa-ni chad-pa yod-ma-yin /
sa-ni mtha'-bral bdag-med-pa /
ha-ni mtshan-ma med-pa-nyid / [22]

Commentary:

[The latter (comments on Ch. 4.22):]

YA (YA-ni) is (the syllable of) Dhūpā, the reality who is pure with respect to creation (skye-ba rnam-par dag) of things past. VA (VA-ni) is that of Puṣpā, the reality who is pure with respect to the abiding (gnas-pa dag-pa) of things present. RA (RA-ni) is that of Ālokā, the reality who is pure with respect to destruction ('jig-pa dag-pa-ste) of the future. LA (LA-ni) is that of Gandhā, the reality who is pure with respect to emptiness (stong-pa dag-pa'o). manifesting in and of itself as the pristine cognition of sameness throughout the four times. As to the four female gatekeepers: ŚA (ŚA-ni) is (the syllable of) Añkuṣā, pure (dag-pa) with respect to the eternalism (rtag-pa) of all things because they are without Independent existence.[1] ŚA (ŚA-ni) is that of Pāśā who is the absence of nihilism (chad-pa yod-ma-yin) with respect to all thinss. SA (SA-ni) is that of Sphoṭā who is free from extremes (mtha'-bral) of eternalism and nihilism with reference to all things, and is without self (bdag-med-pa). HA (HA-ni) is that of Gaṇṭhā who is without (med-pa) substance or sign (mtshan-ma) itself (nyid) in all respects.

[iv. The syllable of pristine cognition and those of the six sages (comment on Ch. 4.23):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the absence of independent existence, which is conclusive in the Prāsaṅgika system, see the aforementioned references, Ch. 3, notes 71-72. 74, the causal vehicles, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3.

Text 4.23 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.23]

KṢA is the spirituality of pristine cognition, the buddha-mind.

I is for the gods, numerous as atomic particles.

Ī is for the anti-gods, numerous as atomic particles.

U is for the human beings, numerous as atomic particles.

Ū is for the animals, numerous as atomic particles.

E is for the tormented spirits, numerous as atomic particles.

AI is for the denizens of hell, numerous as atomic particles. [23] ...

[Tibetan]

kṣa-ni ye-shes thugs-kyi thugs /

i-ni rdul-snyed lha-rnams-su /

ī-ni rdul-snyed lha-ma-yin /

u-ni rdul-snyed mi-rnams-su /

ū-ni rdul-snyed byol-song-rnams /

e-ni rdul-snyed yi-dvags-su /

ai-ni rdul-snyed dmyal-ba-rnams / [23]

Commentary:

[iv. The syllable of pristine cognition and those of the six sages (comment on Ch. 4.23):]

KṢA (KṢA-ni) is the syllable of the male consort Samantabhadra who is the spirituality (thugs)[1] of (kyi) pure self-manifesting pristine cognition (ye-shes), the buddha-mind (thugs) or naturally present pristine cognition, through which the cessation of reality (chos-nyid zad-pa) is approached. [2]

As to the six sages: I (I-ni) is (the syllable of) Śakra who grants instruction for (su) all the gods (lha-rnams) by emanating divine sages, numerous as the atomic particles (rdul-snyed) of oceanic world-systems in as many domains of the gods. Similarly, Ī (Ī-ni) is that of Vemacitra, the sage for the antigods (lha-ma-yin), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). U (U-ni) is that of Śākyamuni for the human beings (mi-rnams-su), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed), Ū (Ū-ni) is that of Sthirasimḥa, the sage for the animals (byol-song-rnams), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). E (E-ni) is that of Jvālamukha, (the sage) for the tormented spirits (yi-dvags-su), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). AI (AI-ni) is the syllable of the oxheaded Yama who grants Instruction for the

denizens of hell (dmyal-ba rnam), numerous as atomic particles (rdul-snyed). These six syllables indeed release great spirituality, which enters into or assumes the voice of Brahmā.

[v. The syllables of the protector of the state and the wrathful deities (comment on Ch. 4.24):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, p. 200.6, Interprets thugs (Ch. 4, section 23) as thugs-rje.

[2]:

For an explanation of chos-nyid zad-pa, which is the last of the four visionary appearances (snang-ba bzhi) in thod-rgal, see below, pp. 1029, 1034.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.24]

O is the destroyer of all.

AU is the destructor of all. [24] ...

[Tibetan]

o-ni thams-cad 'jig-par byed /

au-ni thams-cad zhig-pa-yin / [24]

Commentary:

[v. The syllables of the protector of the state and the wrathful deities (comment on Ch. 4.24):]

As to the protector of the gate: O (O-ni) is (the syllable of) Amṛtakunḍalin, the wrathful deity of the northern gate, the destroyer ('ijg-par-byed) of all (thams-cad) signs and all conceptual elaborations of the three media, who reveals great miracles.

The syllable of the wrathful deity, AU (AU-ni) is the destructor of all (thams-cad zhig-pa yin) the subject-object dichotomy. It is the glow of the peaceful deities, the nature of the five pristine cognitions, which appears as the wrathful deities. Its superscript point (or circle) is the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, its superscript crescent is the mirror-like pristine cognition, its central form is the pristine cognition of sameness, its

vibration is the pristine cognition of discernment, and its natural expression is the pristine cognition of accomplishment.[1]

Now, those who make the last (syllable) out to be the nucleus of Amṛtakunḍalin do not perceive exactly where the maṇḍalas of peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from the cloud-mass of syllables. The cloud-mass of syllables abides as the seed-syllables of all the maṇḍalas of deities. Thus the maṇḍala of the wrathful deities emanates from AUM, the seed-syllable of Buddha Heruka, endowed with the five pristine cognitions.

[Synopsis (201.6-202.2):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

he explanation strictly refers to the syllable AUM. with anusvāra. The terms for these parts of a written syllable are bindu (superscript point), zla-tshes (superscript crescent), khog-pa (central form), nāda (vibration), and rang-bzhin (natural expression).

Text 4.25 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.25]

This great cyclical mass of syllables

Subsumes the garlands of body, speech and mind.

—So they said. Aho! [25] ...

[Tibetan]

yi-ge 'khor-lo tshogs-chen 'dis /
sku-gsung-thugs-kyi phreng-ba bsdus /
—zhes brjod-do / a-ho / [25]

Commentary:

[Synopsis (201.6-202.2):]

Third, the synopsis of these (syllables, comments on Ch. 4.25): Accordingly, this ('dis) cloud or great (chen) cyclical ('khor-lo) mass (tshogs) of syllables (yi-ge), spontaneously present in nature, subsumes (bsdus) all the earlands (phreng-ba) of pristine cognition of the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kyi) of all Buddhas without exception. So (zhes) the Tathāgata himself meaningfully said (brjod-do).

Then, Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed with great delight, indicating the wonder that this very cloud-mass of syllables abides primordially as the

essence of buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction.

[Summary of this Chapter (202.3-206.2)]

The third section (of the exegesis of the meaning of its words—see p. 558) is a summary of both (the above general teaching and detailed exegesis of the syllables). It Includes both the emergence of this summary and its actual words.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.26):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.26]

Then this secret description of these very maṇḍalas, where the assembled host of Tathāgatas and their queens are without duality, emerged from the indestructible body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities. [26]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang gnyis-su med-pa'i
dkyil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kyi gsang-ba 'di-nyid / sku-gsung-thugs yon-tan
'phrin-las rdo-rje-las phyung-ngo / [26]

Commentary:

[Summary of this Chapter (202.3-206.2)]

The third section (of the exegesis of the meaning of its words—see p. 558) is a summary of both (the above general teaching and detailed exegesis of the syllables). It Includes both the emergence of this summary and its actual words.

[The former (comments on Ch. 4.26):]

Once the syllables had been explained in detail, then (de-nas) this ('di) great secret (gsang-ba) description (nyid) of the cloud-mass of syllables, forming the nucleus of these very maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kyi) where the assembled host of (tshogs-dang) the self-manifesting Tathāgatas and their queens (de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i) are naturally without duality (gnyis-su med-pa'i), emerged from the indestructible body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-gsung-thugs yon-tan phrin-las rdo-rje-las byung-ngo) of all the Tathāgatas.

[The latter (comments on Ch. 4.27):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.27]

Aho! This wheel is a Joyous cloud of

Skillful means and discriminative awareness.

It is the causal basis of the provision of enlightened mind.

Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors.

These wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables.

Not compounded by nature.

Are the compounded indestructible reality

Which discloses the maṇḍalas.

Their commitment to do so is not transgressed—

Dependent are they on the great force

of their accumulated causes and conditions.

—Aho! Such are the words of secret indestructible reality which emerged. [27]

[Tibetan]

a-ho /

thabs-dang shes-rab dgyes-sprin byang-chub sems-tshogs rgyu 'khor-lo /

'bras-bu rgyal-ba smin-grub ngo-mtshar ming-tshogs bzhi-bcu-gnyis /

'dus-ma-byas-nyid 'dus-byas rdo-rje dkyil-'khor 'byin-pa'i dam /

'da'-bar mi-mdzad dpang-med rgyu-rkyen tshogs-pa'i mthu-chen yin /

ho / rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o / [27]

Commentary:

Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed in praise of the non-dual nature. From a disposition of skillful means (thabs) or naturally present great spirituality and (dang) natural discriminative awareness (shes-rab) beyond the two extremes, the teacher (the male and female consort Samantabhadra) is primordially endowed with this wheel of syllables or inexhaustible wheel ('khor-lo) of adornment. It is the superior pristine cognition, a joyous (dgyes) cloud (sprin) mass of spirituality for the sake of those to be trained. It is the causal basis (rgyu) of the excellent provision (tshogs) of enlightened mind (byang-chub sems), and its result ('bras-bu) is the maturation (smin) of the great maṇḍalas including those of the forty-two conquerors (rgyal-ba). From this apparition, the emanational body comes forth as a spontaneous accomplishment (grub) for the sake of living beings.

In this way the causal basis comprising these wondrous (ngo-mtshar) syllables—the forty-two consonantal syllables (ming-tshogs bzhi-bcu gnyis) and so forth—becomes manifest. Their essence is the spontaneously

present reality which primordially abides and is not newly compounded by nature ('dus ma-byas-nyid) from causes and conditions. From its disposition self-arisen spirituality appears for the sake of living beings. Thus, the cycles of (the syllables) are the indestructible reality (rdo-rje) which is arrayed in a compounded ('dus-byas) manner and yet lacks duality because it is essentially unchanging.

This reality is the absolutely definitive nature which discloses (sbyin-pa'i) the forty-five maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, and so forth.[1] Its great commitment to do so (dam), which emanates and makes the maṇḍalas manifest, is at all times not transgressed ('da'-bar mi-mdzad). Just as the light-rays of the sun are committed to shine. This apparitional nature of the maṇḍalas indeed resembles the images which dependently arise when form is reflected in a mirror. For, when the naturally present pristine cognition arises from the wheel of syllables, both the self-manifesting maṇḍala (of the body of perfect rapture) and the maṇḍala (of the emanational body) which trains living beings dependently (dbang-med) arise in all their emanational forms throughout the ten directions. Such manifestations are (yin) derived from the great force (mthu-chen) of their accumulated (tshogs-pa'i) causes (rgyu), i.e. the cloud-mass of syllables, and conditions (rkyen), i.e. the appearance of pristine cognition and beings to be trained. Aho! (A-ho) is therefore an exclamation of wonder. This is the explanation which accords with the buddhas' emanational nature.

Furthermore, this wheel of syllables may also be explained in accordance with its presence in the body and its meditation on the path. As to the former: Inside the bodies of all corporeal beings, the seed or provision of enlightened mind, a joyous cloud of white and red seminal points without duality, which respectively indicate skillful means and discriminative awareness, is the causal basis of a relative nature. Abiding on the petals and at the centre of the four wheels (cakra) within the energy channels which are smooth and stalk-like, this seed appears in the form of syllables of pure-essence, radiant in the manner of a butter lamp; and the result (associated with them) is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors. In this way, the forty-two wondrous consonantal syllables naturally and primordially abide. They are the reality or inner radiance, not compounded by nature, from whose disposition emerges the compounded indestructible reality, i.e. the experience of the path which unites learning in skillful means with discriminative awareness. It is these syllables which manifestly disclose the maṇḍalas of buddha-body and pristine cognition. Their great commitment to do so is not transgressed because the ground, or the syllables themselves, emerges dependently, radiating as the maṇḍala of deities through the conditions of the path. In this way, the potential and force of their accumulated causes and conditions do emerge. The expression of wonderment, Aho!, is revealed because this (result) is present in the ground from the present moment.[2]

Furthermore, there are two explanations (of this same passage) connected with the meditational modes of the path, among which (the first) refers to the creation and perfection stages of the path of liberation: [3] When one has cultivated the enlightened mind of skillful means, meditated on the contemplation of the real nature or discriminative

awareness, and meditated on the contemplations associated with the universal appearance of the joyous cloud-mass (of syllables), and the causal basis or provision of enlightened mind, then one meditates, as previously indicated, on the wheel or cloud-mass of syllables. This has as its result the maturation and accomplishment of the maṇḍalas of the conquerors: The wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables disclose the genuine maṇḍalas of indestructible reality in which the non-compounded buddha-body of reality and the compounded body of form are without duality. Their commitment to do so is not transgressed because the force of their accumulated causes and conditions dependently arises. Aho! is an exclamation of great wonder (at the result) which emerges in the manner of a reflected image or of a magical apparition.

According to the path of skillful means: There is a joyous cloud, the essential nature of the four delights, in which are mingled without duality the "moon-fluid" (semen), indicative of the male consort or skillful means and the "sun-fluid" (ovum), indicative of the female consort or discriminative awareness. This is the seed, the provision of enlightened mind, the descent of which into the four wheels (cakra) gives rise to meditation on bliss and emptiness without duality. its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors, the wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables.[4]

The essence of these (syllables) abides as the Indestructible reality where skillful means and discriminative awareness are non-dual because the four non-compounded pristine cognitions are compounded by arousal, filling, extension and so forth (of the seminal fluids).[5] It is these (syllables) which disclose the genuine maṇḍalas, the five spontaneously present buddha-bodies. Their commitment to do so is not transgressed because, by meditating on this pristine cognition, (the result) dependently emerges, and is achieved through the great might of accumulated causes and conditions, i.e. the auspicious coincidence of the male and female consorts. The expression Aho! indicates great wonder.

Although this (summary) is profound and difficult to fathom I have revealed it in some detail.

Such are the words (tshig-tu'o) which reveal this secret Indestructible reality (rdo-rje gsang-ba'i), and whose meaning is without duality in respect of the Identity of pristine cognition.

[Synopsis of the Chapter (206.2-207.2)]

[The third part (of the interlinear commentary; see p. 557) is the synopsis or conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 4.28):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these forty-five maṇḍalas, see above pp. 571-57?- The text, p. 203-3. reads dkyil-'khor lnga-bcu rtsa-linga (sic!).

[2]:

On the practices associated with the wheel of syllables in the energy channels of the body, see below, pp. 1006-1019. The four wheels (cakra) referred to are those of crown, throat, heart and navel.

[3]:

On the path of liberation (grol-lam). see below, pp. 1019-1021. The three contemplations on this path of liberation, i.e. those of real nature, universal appearance and causal basis, are also discussed below, pp. 679. 771. and 851. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 158ff.

[4]:

Tibetan thabs yab-kyi zla-ba-dang shes-rab yum-gyi nyi-ma. On the path of skillful means (thabs-lam), see below, pp. 899-914, and especially, pp. 1006-1019.

[5]:

"arousal" (Tibetan bsrubs-ra), "filling" ('gengs-pa), and "extension" ('grems-pa), On the four pristine cognitions associated with the four delights, see below, pp. 1006-1019.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 4.28]

At these words, all the Tathāgatas were transformed into the wheel of syllables. This completes the fourth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled the Cyclical Array of the Garland of Syllables. [28]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad yi-ge'i 'khor-lor gyur-to / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i 'khor-lo bkod-pa'i le'u-ste bzhi-pa'o / [28]

Commentary:

[Synopsis of the Chapter (206.2-207.2)]

[The third part (of the interlinear commentary; see p. 557) is the synopsis or conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 4.28):]

All things are thus primordial Buddha-hood in the cloud-mass of

syllables. At these words (zhes brjod-pas), all the (thams-cad) self-manifesting Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) of the maṇḍala of the five enlightened families were transformed (gyur-to) in a single savour into the expanse where they are primordially undifferentiated from the reality of the wheel of syllables, naturally pure in essence, and where they are without conjunction or disjunction with reference to the non-dual essence.

This is simply a movement in pursuit of their natural expression, free from conceptual elaboration, and apart from that no transformation or extraneous emanation is required.

It says accordingly in the chapter on the geometric rites from the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483):[1]

All different doctrines are pursued.
And all doctrines, here and there, are pursued.
One who pursues all doctrines
Follows that which is free from extremes.

Similarly, when the maṇḍala is said to radiate, it does not extraneously deviate from the self-manifesting maṇḍala. One should know that (radiation) to be Identical to reality. There are some who say that it does appear to change in the perception of those who require training. While one would not contradict that such appearances accord with the Intelligence of those present when (the buddhas) array the lamp (of the teaching) in the world and so forth, in this context (of the self-manifesting maṇḍala) there is no such connection because this maṇḍala of the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array is the reality which as never changes.[2]

This completes (-'o) and establishes the exegesis of the fourth chapter (le'u ste bzhi-pa) from (las) the primordial Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to The Real (gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-na), the reality of the garland of syllables, entitled the Cyclical Array of the (-'i 'khor-lo bkod-pa) great Garland ('phreng-ba) of spontaneously present Syllables (yi-ge).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See T. Skorupski, The Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra.

[2]:

The present description of the wheel of syllables, is held by the author to indicate the continuum of the ground, and is thus distinguished from their utilisation of the path, as described below, pp. 1006-1019.

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Then, coming forth from the array of the cloud-mass which is the wheel of syllables, the Magical Emanation (sgyu-phrul) uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

Mind-as-such without basis

Is the basis of all things.

Mind-as-such is the nature of the syllables.

The syllables are a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gems. [2]

By the manifest perfection of

The forty-two deity maṇḍala of Magical Emanation

In the maṇḍala of the Net,

All maṇḍalas perfect throughout the ten directions

And four times will be accomplished. [3]

Nectar will be produced and extracted.

Removing the four hundred and four ailments.

Rapture will emerge, evil existences will be purified.

And the metamorphosis of all things will be accomplished. [4]

Space will emerge solid as indestructible reality.

That will burn, and then the fire too will be incinerated.

Turning into water, it will cascade in the appropriate way.

This world-system will be dispersed—

All will be emptied, and will collapse. [5]

Summons, expulsion, bondage, liberation.

Alleviation, killing, vanquishing, and victory

Will be accomplished by this contemplation. [6]

This pristine cognition will turn at will
Into the forms of its names, words and so forth,
Like the light which emerges in darkness,
Like alchemical transmutation Into gold.
And like an efficacious medication. [7]

To persevere in making offerings to the teacher,
To have clear realisation.
To keep the commitments, (recite) the mantras,
And to know the seals without defect—
One who possesses these requisites will become accomplished.
One who lacks them will be unsuccessful and lost. [8]

The supreme nucleus of accomplishments
Comprehended by the conquerors of the three times,
Is a wish-fulfilling treasury, unexhausted in time.
It emerges without increase or decrease—
From the non-substantial there is a substantial cloud
Which emerges in diverse forms, and changes. [9]

Substantial things in reality are not substantial.
Contemplation is the mastery of that realisation. [10]

Whoever does not know the non-referential
Does not know the expanse of reality.
For this reason, one should know the non-referential
By destroying the substantial and the non-substantial. [11]

Mind-as-such, groundless and baseless.
Is neither male, nor female, nor neuter.
It is not signless, nor is it classified in families.
It is colourless and shapeless.
It is not an abode, nor is it anything at all.
This pristine cognition of the real expanse
Is the causal basis for all seals of skillful means. [12]

From skillful means emerges skillful means.
The unthinkable skillful means.
Not differentiated, it becomes differentiated
In the unthinkable inner and outer maṇḍalas.
This is a display of pristine cognition,
The supreme seal of fearless Samantabhadra. [13]

When one whose mind resembles an inebriated elephant's
Has been tamed by means of meditative equipoise,
And has become very stable in the mantras and their seals.
That one will obtain amazing great accomplishment. [14]

So saying, the Tathāgata himself was delighted by that vision. This
completes the fifth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With
Respect To The Real, entitled The Contemplation that Attains the Magical
Net. [15]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.1]

Then, coming forth from the array of the cloud-mass which is the wheel of syllables, the Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul) uttered this meaningful expression. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas yi-ge 'khor-lo'i sprin bkod-pa-las sgyu-'phrul rnam-par 'phro-ba
'di ched-du brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (207.3-224.4):]

The sequence of attainment which accords with this (cloud-mass of syllables, see p. 543) has three parts, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and the conclusion of the chapter.

[The first (207.3-207-4—comments on Ch. 5.1):]

Once the nature of buddha-body, speech, and mind had been explained dependent on the display of the syllables, then (de-nas), coming forth (rnam-par 'phro-ba) in its sequence of attainment from the array of the cloud-mass which is the wheel of syllables (yi-ge 'khor-lo'i sprin bkod-pa-las), the Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul) in whom skillful means and discriminative awareness are non-dual again uttered this meaningful expression (' dl ched-du br.1od-do).

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (207. 21-224.1)]

The second part is threefold: It comprises the sequence of accomplishments which are attained; the nature of the cloud-mass of syllables through which these are attained, and a teaching on the actual skillful means of attainment.

i. Sequence of the Accomplishments which are Attained (207-5-213-2):

The first of these has four subdivisions, namely, a teaching on primordially pure mind-as-such which is the basis of accomplishment, the supreme accomplishment which is achieved thereby, the common accomplishments which are its branches, and the similes which illustrate these accomplishments.

[The first subdivision (comments on Ch. 5.2):]

[Read next page]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.2]

Mind-as-such without basis

Is the basis of all things.

Mind-as-such is the nature of the syllables.

The syllables are a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gems. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

rtsa-ba med-pa'i sems-nyid-ni /
chos-rnams kun-gyi rtsa-ba yin /
sems-nyid yi-ge'i rang-bzhin-te /
yi-ge yid-bzhin rin-chen sprin / [2]

Commentary:

It is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Earth indeed abides in water,
Water in air, and air in space.
Space does not abide in anything.
Similarly, the components and activity fields
Abide in deeds and conflicting emotions.
Deeds and conflicting emotions always abide
In inappropriate mental scrutiny.
Inappropriate mental scrutiny indeed abides
In the purity of mind.
But the nature of mind does not itself abide
In any of these things.

Accordingly, all things depend on mind, and mind depends on naturally pure inner radiance. Therefore, mind-as-such (sems-nyid), a space-like nature which is without (med-pa'i) ground or any basis (rtsa-ba), is the basis (rtsa-ba yin) of all (kun-gyi) diverse things (chos-rnams) of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, pure and impure.

The Dohās (T. 2273) accordingly say:

Mind-as-such alone is the seed of all.
From which existence and nirvāṇa emanate.
Obeisance to mind which is like a wish-fulfilling gem,
Granting the desired result.

Just as fire and water emerge under different conditions from a single lump of crystal, the unique mind-as-such appears as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa through the action or inaction of the subject-object dichotomy, and

through ignorance and awareness respectively. But actually there is no dichotomy. The primordial-ly pure mind-as-such (sems-nyid) therefore primordially arises in the nature of the syllables (yi-ge'i rang-bzhin-te) of inner radiance, and its appearance is without Independent existence. If mind-as-such, comprising the syllables (yi-ge) which appear in this way, is realised, the two kinds of benefit are possessed, manifestly causing a cascade of adornments to fall. Even when unrealised, it is primordially present as the ground from which all that is desired emerges. Therefore (the syllables) are a cloud-mass (sprin) of wish-fulfilling (yid-bzhin) precious gems (rin-chen).

[The second subdivision (comments on Ch. 5.3):]

[Read next page]

Text 5.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.3]

By the manifest perfection of
The forty-two deity maṇḍala of Magical Emanation
In the maṇḍala of the Net,
All maṇḍalas perfect throughout the ten directions
And four times will be accomplished. [3] ...

[Tibetan]

sgyu-'phrul dkyil-'khor bzhi-bcu gnyis /
dra-ba'i dkyil-'khor mngon-rdzogs-pas /
phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi rdzogs-pa-yi /
dkyil-'khor thams-cad 'grub-par 'gyur / [3]

Commentary:

In the disposition of inner radiant mind-as-such, the essence of the forty-two deity (bzhi-bcu gnyis) maṇḍala of Magical Emanation (sgyu-'phrul dkyil-'khor) which appears in the form of the syllables, naturally and spontaneously present, has primordially attained the reality of manifest perfection (mngon-rdzogs) in the maṇḍala of the Net (dra-ba'i dkyil-'khor), the discriminative awareness free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. By (-pas) virtue of this, when It is experientially cultivated according to the sequence of contemplation, all maṇḍalas perfect (rdzogs-pa-yi dkyil-'khor thams-cad) in the unique enlightened family and intention of all the buddhas throughout the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi) will be ('gyur) completely accomplished ('grub-par). This is because the basis of the maṇḍalas, the cloud-mass of syllables, will Itself have been experientially cultivated without error.

The third subdivision, the common accomplishments, has three aspects:

A teaching on the spontaneous accomplishment of the four rites which is a sign that the five pristine cognitions are accomplished; an exegesis of the means of attaining the consummation of the five elements which is a sign that the five components are inherently pure; and a description of the attainment of the eighth accomplishment which is a sign that the eight aggregates of consciousness are pure in the expanse.[1]

[The first of these (comments on Ch. 5.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the four rites, see below, pp. 783-786, 1258-1264. On the consummation of the five elements, see also above, Ch. 1, note 50; and on this enumeration of eight accomplishments, see pp. 609-610. On the term "Inherent purity" (gnas-su dag-pa). see above Ch. 1, note 18; and on the significance of "pure in the expanse" (dbyings-su dag-pa). see Ch. 1, pp. 394-5 and note 17.

Text 5.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.4]

Nectar will be produced and extracted.

Removing the four hundred and four ailments.

Rapture will emerge, evil existences will be purified.

And the metamorphosis of all things will be accomplished. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

bdud-rtsi 'gyur-zhing 'byung-ba-dang /
bzhi-brgya rtsa-bzhi'i nad-sel-zhing /
longs-spyod 'byung-zhing ngan-song-sbyong /
ci-yang gzhan-du 'gyur-ba 'grub / [4]

Commentary:

When the mirror-like pristine cognition is accomplished, nectar (bdud-rtsi). which is a medication for the relief of living beings, will even be produced ('gyur) from all that is poisonous; and (zhing) it will be extracted ('byung-ba-dang) for the benefit of oneself and others, thereby removing (sel-zhing) all the four hundred-and-four ailments (bzhi-brgya rtsa-bzhi'i nad) and causing happiness.

Concerning the four-hundred-and-four ailments, Caraka says (in the Carakasamhitā):

One-hundred-and-one are ailments caused by imaginary spirits,
One-hundred-and-one are ailments caused by immediate conditions,
One-hundred-and-one are basic ailments
Which will be compounded in the future.
And one-hundred-and-one are naturally caused by past deeds.

Alternatively, it is explained that the four categories of wind, bile, phlegm, and their combination each possesses one hundred and one types (of ailment).[1]

When the pristine cognition of sameness is accomplished, the rapture (longs-spyod) of the celestial treasure-store, which does not know exhaustion because anything desired may be extracted from space, will spontaneously emerge ('byung-zhing) and fulfil hopes, surpassing the raptures of gods and humans. When the pristine cognition of reality's expanse is accomplished, the obscurations covering the minds of all living beings within the evil existences (ngan-song) will be purified (sbyong). and they will be established in celestial bliss. When the pristine cognition of discernment and the pristine cognition of accomplishment are accomplished, the miracle of the metamorphosis (gzhan-du 'gyur-ba) of all things (ci-yang) and their appearances will be accomplished ('grub). This is because there are miraculous abilities to make the apparitional invisible and the invisible apparent, to interchange the actual appearance assumed by an object—as when fire is turned into water and earth revealed as space, to subjugate others, to resurrect the dead, and so forth.

The Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) accordingly says:

The perpetual range and also the miraculous abilities of mind.
That are accomplished in contemplation, are inconceivable;
The attributes of sacramental substances, medicines,
Mantras and gemstones too are inconceivable;
The temporal conjunction[2] and auspicious power
Of planets and stars are also inconceivable;
And the perceptual range of empowered Bodhisattvas
And the Tathāgatas is indeed Inconceivable.

[The second aspect (comments on Ch. 5.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"ailments caused by imaginary spirits" (kun-brtags gdon-gyi nad), "ailments caused by immediate conditions" (phral-byung rkyen-gyi nad), "future ailments" ('byung-dus gzhi-yi nad), and "past ailments" (rang-bzhin sngon-gyi nad). On these ailments and their combinations of *rlung*, *mkhris-pa*, and *bad-kan*, see Rechung Rinpoche, Tibetan Medicine. Ch. 2, section 12; also below. Ch. 15, note 43.

[2]:

Tibetan dus-kyi 'khyud-sbyar.

Text 5.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.5]

Space will emerge solid as indestructible reality.

That will burn, and then the fire too will be incinerated.

Turning into water, it will cascade in the appropriate way.

This world-system will be dispersed—

All will be emptied, and will collapse. [5] ...

[Tibetan]

nam-mkha' rdo-rje sra-'byung-zhing /
'bar-nas me-yang 'tshig-pa-dang /
chur-'gyur 'bab-pa'ang de-bzhin-te /
'jig-rten khams-'di 'thor-ba-dang /
thams-cad stongs-shing ltung-bar 'gyur / [5]

Commentary:

When the contemplation of the consummation of the earth element has been obtained through the Inherent purity of the component of form, space (nam-mkha') will be consecrated and accordingly will emerge ('byung-zhing) in a solid (sre) state, as the terrain of indestructible reality (rdo-rje).

By obtaining power over the contemplation of the consummation of the fire element when the component of feeling is inherently pure, that fire will burn ('bar) in the body and then (nas) turn all appearances into a mass of fire, so that the hottest fire (me) of the sentient denizens of hell too will be incinerated (yang 'tshig-pa-dang), releasing them from that suffering.

When power has been obtained over the contemplation of the consummation of the water element through the purity of perception, all appearances, turning into water (chur-'gyur), will pour down to earth, and everything will also be seen to cascade ('bab-pa'ang) in a single stream of water, removing the sufferings of others in the same way appropriate (de-bzhin-te) to the action of the fire element. This is because these are emanations of contemplation in which there are no conflicting emotions.

When the contemplation of the consummation of the air element is mastered through purity of habitual tendencies, this world-system ('jig-rten khams-ni) of coarse and subtle appearances will be dispersed ('thor-ba-dang) into atomic particles, diffusing miracles and benefitting sentient beings. Then, when consciousness is pure and the contemplation of the space element has been obtained, all (thams-cad) world-systems will be emptied (stongs) and (shing) the sun and moon too will collapse (lhung-bar 'gyur) to earth. Such miraculous abilities will be manifestly acquired.

In this context, there are some who meditate that the five elements emerge in this manner from the heart-centres of the deities of the five enlightened families, but that is unconnected with the exegesis of the actual meaning of this text. The former is a particular means of attainment, whereas the present a description is a general one.[1]

[The third aspect (comments on Ch. 5.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The particular means for attainment is described below, pp. 619-620.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.6]

Summons, expulsion, bondage, liberation.

Alleviation, killing, vanquishing, and victory

Will be accomplished by this contemplation. [6] ...

[Tibetan]

dgug-dang btang-dang bcing-dang grol /
gso-dang bsad-dang 'pham-dang rgyal /
ting-'dzin 'di-yis byed-par 'gyur / [6]

Commentary:

This concerns the attainment of the eight minor types of ritual which is a sign that the eight aggregates of consciousness are pure: When the eight aggregates including the consciousness of the ground-of-all have been purified and power has been obtained over awareness or pristine cognition, there will be a summons (dgug-dang) (which draws) into one's presence the object of one's attainment: there will be an expulsion (btang-dang) or exorcism (of negative forces) to another sphere; there will be bondage (bcing-dang) of enemies, thieves and so forth; there will be liberation (dgrol) from all imprecations and harmful forces; there will be alleviation (gso-dang) of plague, poison and so forth; there will be killing (bsad-dang) of hostile enemies and obstructors; there will be vanquishing ('pham-dang) of one's enemies' faction; and there will be victory (rgyal) of one's own faction. All these rituals will be accomplished by this contemplation (ting-'dzin 'di-yis byed-par 'gyur) of the cloudmass of syllables.

[The fourth subdivision (comments on Ch. 5.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.7]

This pristine cognition will turn at will
Into the forms of its names, words and so forth,
Like the light which emerges in darkness,
Like alchemical transmutation Into gold.
And like an efficacious medication. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nyid ye-shes rang-snang-ba'i /
ming-tshig gzugs-sogs yid-bzhin-gyis /
mun-la snang-byung ji-bzhin-du /
'gyur-bas gser-'gyur sman-gyi tshul / [7]

Commentary:

As for the similes illustrative of these accomplishments: There are outwardly visible miraculous images of this (de-nyid) accomplishment attained in contemplation, which arise as originally pure self-manifesting pristine cognition (ye-shes rang-snang-ba'i). One who follows the ritual experiences the different forms of its (gzugs) respective garlands of syllables, i.e. the vowels and consonants represented in names and words (ming-tshig). and their colours, light-rays, and so forth (sogs). Consequently, the result of this contemplation is accomplished at will (yid-bzhin-gyis), and this wheel of syllables is seen as desired, like (ji-bzhin-du), for example, the light which emerges in darkness (mun-la snang-byung). It will turn ('gyur-ba) into nectar the outer and inner poisons, without renouncing them, and is thus known to be like alchemical transmutation into gold (gser-'gyur), and like an efficacious medication (sman-gyi tshul) which pacifies and alleviates distempers, right where they are.

[ii. The Nature of the Cloud-Mass of Syllables through which these Accomplishments are Attained (213.2-215-6):]

The second (see p. 603) concerns the nature of the cloud-mass of syllables through which these (accomplishments) are attained. It comprises both the Individuals who attain them and the essence which is attained.

[The former (comments on Ch. 5.8):]

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Text 5.8 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.8]

To persevere in making offerings to the teacher,

To have clear realisation.

To keep the commitments, (recite) the mantras,

And to know the seals without defect—

One who possesses these requisites will become accomplished.

One who lacks them will be unsuccessful and lost. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

ston-pa mchod-brtson rtogs-pa gsal /

dam-tshig sngags-dang phyag-rgya-rnams /

ma-nyams shes-shing yo-byad-ldan /

'grub-'gyur mi-ldan don-med brlag / [8]

Commentary:

The first branch for accomplishing the syllables is to persevere in making; offerings (mchod-brtson) to the teacher (ston-pa), the master of indestructible reality and the deities of the maṇḍala, (who have revealed) the path to liberation dependent on some extraordinary object (i.e. their own gurus). Now the guru is the supreme genuine being of the (buddha-)field.

As is said in the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

One should know the guru to be more awesome

Than the buddhas of a hundred thousand aeons;

For the buddhas of those aeons emerge

Dependent on their gurus.

I have not explained that a buddha emerges

Who has previously not had a guru.

And:

Even though one is Ignorant and unrealised

With respect to all doctrines,

When one has greatly served a genuine guru with veneration,

The ocean of saṃsāra will be traversed.

For seeds vastly multiply when planted in excellent fields,

And even a sesame seed in an excellent field of genuine merit

Is not dispersed, but will multiply and ripen.

And in the Vows of the Magical Net (dra-ba sdom-pa):[1]

The Guru is the central deity of all maṇḍalas.
When offerings have been made with veneration.
All maṇḍalas are delighted.
It goes without saying that (offerings are made)
To the maṇḍala which is at hand!

The second (branch for accomplishing the syllables) is to have clear (gsal) unwavering realisation (rtogs-pa gsal) of the meditation associated with the deities and syllables.

Accordingly, the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) says:

All the recitations and austerities
Of one who has practised
With a mind which deviates extraneously
Are correctly said to be pointless.

The third (branch for accomplishing the syllables) is to keep the basic and ancillary commitments (dam-tshig).

Accordingly, the Cakrasaṃvara (T. 363) says:

Keeping the commitments, all mantras will be accomplished.

The fourth branch (for accomplishing the syllables) is to recite the secret mantras (sngags) purely—not too swiftly or slowly, without omissions or additions, and not too loudly or too quietly.[2] Accordingly, it Bays in the Supreme Commitment (dam-tshig mchog):

Mantra will indeed be verbally accomplished
By one endowed with its six aspects.

The Fifth branch (for accomplishing the syllables) is to know (shes-shing) the seals (phyag-rgya-rnams), i.e. those of doctrine, action, commitment, and the great seal, and to know and secure their branches without defect (ma-nyams), in accordance with the truth.[3]

Accordingly it says in the Supreme Conqueror (rgyal-mchog):

Accomplishment will be attained
By one who possesses the four seals.

One who possesses (ldan) these five, with their subsidiary branches—the (appropriate) place, time and requisites (yo-byad) for attainment,[4] will become accomplished ('grub-'gyur) in these (syllables). But It is said that the individual who lacks them (mi-ldan) will be lost (brlag) because, even though he would attain these (syllables), he would be unsuccessful (don-med). and, moreover, roasted in evil existences.

Accordingly, the Secret Seminal Point (thig-le gsang-ba) says:

One who does not venerate the guru,
Who has not obtained empowerment.
Who is without commitments and devoid of mantras.
And whose supreme branches of attainment are defective.
Will assuredly have no accomplishment in this world.
That one will be roasted in future evil existences.

[The latter, concerning the essence which is attained, (comments on Ch. 5.9):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This quotation is a slight variant on Ch. 9. section 19, and the dra-ba sdom-pa corresponds to that very chapter of our text.

[2]:

For a longer account of the recitation of mantras relating to this tradition, see Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, spyi-don 'od-gsal snying-po, pp. 252-259.

[3]:

On these four seals and their subdivisions, see Ch. 8, pp. 711-745.

[4]:

On these requisites, see below, pp. 850-852.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.9]

The supreme nucleus of accomplishments
Comprehended by the conquerors of the three times,
Is a wish-fulfilling treasury, unexhausted in time.
It emerges without increase or decrease—
From the non-substantial there is a substantial cloud
Which emerges in diverse forms, and changes. [9] ...

[Tibetan]

dus-gsum rgyal-bas thugs-chud-pa'i /
dngos-grub mchog-gi snying-po-ni /
zad-pa'i dus-med yid-bzhin mdzod /

'phel-'grib med-par 'byung-ba-ste /
dngos-po med-las dngos-po'i sprin /
sna-tshogs rnam-par 'byung-zhing 'gyur / [9]

Commentary:

[The latter, concerning the essence which is attained, (comments on Ch. 5.9):]

The supreme nucleus (mchog-zi snying-po ni) of supreme and common accomplishments (dngos-grub), comprehended by the conquerors of the three times (dug-gsum rgyal-bas thugs-chud-pa'i), past, future and present, is the wheel of syllables. Therefore its essence is a genuine wish-fulfilling treasury unexhausted in time (zad-pa'i dus-med yid-bzhin mdzod), whereby all that is desired emerges spontaneously in the manner of precious gemstones. Now, the essence is naturally pure—the buddha-body of reality is without increase ('phel) in the manner of space, the buddha-body of perfect rapture is without decrease ('grib-med-par) in the manner of rainbow colours; and, from this disposition, there emerges ('byung-ba-ste) the diversified emanational display of the emanational body. Thue, from the (las) disposition of the non-substantial (dnzos-po med) buddha-body of reality, there is a substantial cloud (dnzos-po'i sprin) of ostensible appearances, i.e. the two apparitional buddha-bodies of form, which emerges (-par 'byung) in diverse (sna-tshogs) forms (rnam) of enlightened activity for the sake of living beings, corresponding to the intelligence of those to be trained; and this changes ('gyur) into a spontaneously present display. This is the essence of the cloud-mass of syllables.

[iii. A Teaching on the Actual Skillful Means of Attainment (215-6-224.1):]

The third (see p. 603) is a teaching on the actual skillful means of attainment. It has three parts, namely, a brief teaching on contemplation, a detailed exegesis of its nature, and a synopsis concerning the unique meditative equipoise.

[The brief teaching (216.1-216.4, comments on Ch. 5.10):]

[Read next page]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.10]

Substantial things in reality are not substantial.
Contemplation is the mastery of that realisation. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

Commentary:

While all things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, appear to be substantial (dngos), illustrated by the appearance of the cloud-mass of syllables during the creation stage, the reality (nyid) of these things (rnams) is naturally uncreated. This nature, in (na) which things are not substantial (dngos-med-par). is known to refer to the primordially pure perfection stage. Once the emanation and absorption (of the maṇḍala) has been refined from the disposition of the creation stage, which appears but is not recognised (to exist inherently), and without attachment to true existence, there follows the contemplation (ting-'dzin) of the wheel of syllables. This is (yin) one which entails repeated training in contemplation or realisation (rtogs-pa'i) of the emanation & absorption of syllables corresponding to a specific ritual; and the display or mastery (dbang-sgyur) of that in awareness.[1]

The second (the detailed exegesis of the nature of contemplation; 216.4-222.5) comprises both the contemplation which is a meditation on discriminative awareness, the buddha-body of reality or emptiness, and the contemplation which is a meditation on skillful means, the buddha-body of form or appearance.

The former (216.4-218.6) Includes a general teaching of instruction on the non-referential truth and a detailed exegesis of the non-dual pristine cognition.

[i. This (comments on Ch. 5.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These aspects of contemplation based respectively on skillful means (thabs) and discriminative awareness (shes-rab) are discussed in the following pages of this chapter from the standpoint of the ground. in terms of the path, see below, Chs. 11-13.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.11]

Whoever does not know the non-referential

Does not know the expanse of reality.

For this reason, one should know the non-referential

By destroying the substantial and the non-substantial. [11] ...

[Tibetan]

gang-gis dmigs-med mi-shes-pa /
de-yis chos-kyi dbyings mi-shes /
de-phyir dngos-dang dngos-med-pa /
'jigs-pas dmigs-med shes-par-gyis / [11]

Commentary:

Whoever (gang-gis) as an individual does not know the (mi-shes-pa) nature of all things to be non-referential (dmigs-med) and signless, does not know (mi-shes) the abiding nature of the expanse of reality (de-yis chos-kyi dbyings), free from conceptual elaboration.

It says in the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

Without seeing the Inconceivable,
The child who sets his intellect
On the unthinkable is foolish.
That one will turn to an activity field of darkness.

And in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Without knowing phenomena and their nature.
He does not know the expanse of reality.

For this reason (de-phyir) it is taught that one should know (shes-par-gyis) the non-referential (dmigs-med) reality, the nature of all things, by (-pas) analysing and destroying ('jig) deluded ideas which apprehend the subject-object dichotomy. For, when the dream-like and diverse substantial (dngos-dang) objects which appear to the mind are investigated and analysed, they do not exist, either externally or internally, and are similar to space; and (dang) when the non-substantial (dngos-med-pa) colourless consciousness which makes that realisation is analysed, the subject too is essenceless because it is not found anywhere, externally or internally. At this juncture there is no reference to anything apart from the mind and mental appearances.

The Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) accordingly says:

When the substantial and non-substantial
Are not present before the intellect.
There are no extraneous forms.
Thus, one is quiescent in the non-referential.

[The detailed exegesis of non-dual pristine cognition (comments on Ch. 5.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.12]

Mind-as-such, groundless and baseless.
Is neither male, nor female, nor neuter.
It is not signless, nor is it classified in families.
It is colourless and shapeless.
It is not an abode, nor is it anything at all.
This pristine cognition of the real expanse
Is the causal basis for all seals of skillful means. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

gzhi-rtsa med-pa'i sems-nyid-ni /
pho-mo ma-yin ma-ning-min /
mtshan-med ma-yin rigs-rgyud min /
kha-dog ma-yin dbyibs ma-yin /
gnas-su ma-yin gang-yang-min /
de-bzhin-nyid dbyings ye-shes-te /
thabs-kyis phyag-rgya kun-gyi rgyu / [12]

Commentary:

[The detailed exegesis of non-dual pristine cognition:]

Mind-as-such (sems-nyid-ni), primordially groundless and baseless (gzhi-rtsa med-pa'i) like space does not exist as any substance or sign. This is the case because it is neither (ma-yin) called male (pho), nor female (mo), nor (min) is it referred to as neuter (ma-ning). Mind-as-such exists from the present moment without saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, good or evil. This nature is not (ma-yin) even referred to as signless (mtshan-med) because it transcends extremes of being and non-being. Nor, in this respect, is (min) mind-as-such classified (rgyud) into the different spiritual families (rigs) of buddhas and sentient beings, or social families (rigs) of Kṣatriyas, Cāṇḍālas and so forth, it is colourless (kha-dog ma-yin) in terms of white and so forth, and shapeless (dbyibs ma-yin) in terms of square and so forth, because it is essentially empty and signless. Furthermore, mind-as-such is not (ma-yin) existent as a Buddha-field or as an abode (gnas-su) of sentient beings. Nor is it (min) existent as anything at all (gang-yang) which can be positively identified.

The Sūtra of the King Contemplation (T. 127) accordingly says:

Mind, essentially non-referential, is not within thought.
Naturally pure and essentially empty,
It is the primordial, selfless, profound reality,
Profound, quiescent, and unelaborate as space.

This mind-as-such is reality, the pure pristine cognition (ye-shes-te) of

the real expanse (de-bzhin-nyid dbyings). Through its abiding nature, it is the causal basis for (rgyu) accomplishing all the seals of skillful means (thabs-kyi phyag-rgya) and it is the causal basis for all (kun-gyi rgyu) discriminative awareness. It brings about auspicious connections and all genuine results associated with the expanse where all excellencies are accomplished. This is because there are no divergent doctrines which have a ground, path and result extraneous to the truth of naturally pure mind-as-such.

The latter (218.6-222.5) is the contemplation which is a meditation on skillful means, the buddha-body of form or the apparitional nature. It includes an overview and interlinear commentary.

i. The overview concerns both the attainment of the wheel of syllables and the attainment of their ritual feast-offerings. As to the former: After one has meditated in the above manner on the emanation and absorption from the syllable A, preceded by the three kinds of contemplation,[1] then the essence of discriminative awareness is meditative equipoise (which persists) until stability has been obtained in the disposition of the baseless mind-as-such, free from conceptual elaboration despite that emanation and absorption of the syllables. Then, one meditates on the maṇḍala of deities, refining the mind in a display of the four rites and supreme contemplation which are attained by means of the light-rays of the garland of mantras. Subsequently the merit should be dedicated. Signs of accomplishment emerge when this (visualisation) is stable and when thirty-one million one-hundred-thousand recitations (of mantra) have been accumulated.[2]

As to the attainment of ritual feast-offerings: By means of the cloud-mass of syllables, oneself is transformed into the deity, with the result that the rays of light and the deity's emanation & absorption pacify ailments and malign spirits, they enrich or Increase the lifespan and one's experience of rapture, they subjugate, and they perform (wrathful rites of) expulsion, killing, paralysis, bondage, and so forth. These rites will be accomplished within seven days and so forth through the emanation and absorption of diverse contemplations.[3]

Then in a similar manner, oneself is clearly visualised as Vairocana, and one meditates that (extending) from his heart-centre into space there is a stairway and terrain of indestructible reality. Thereupon, the contemplation of the earth element will be obtained, one will not sink in water, and one will be seated in space in a meditative posture.

Then one visualises that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Amitābha, there is a syllable RAM from which fire emerges, burning all phenomenal existence and pacifying the fires of hell. Thereby the contemplation of the fire element will be accomplished, causing a rain of fire to descend.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Ratnasambhava there is a syllable KHAM, from which there is a cascade of pristine cognition, filling the world. Thereby the contemplation of the water element will be accomplished, causing outer phenomena to pour down to earth and the fires of evil existences to be quenched.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Amoghasiddhi there is a syllable YAM from which a blast of air emerges, dispersing the coarse substances of the world.

Then one meditates that in the heart-centre of oneself in the form of Akṣobhya, there is a syllable E with which space becomes united. Therupon, all appearances will be emptied and one will accomplish the rite whereby the sun and moon are eclipsed and collapse.

Similarly, one meditates on the colours of all these apparitions—white, yellow, red, green and dark blue—whereby one will accomplish the identity of the five great light rays and their apparitions.[4]

All this is merely illustrative because there are countless other emanational rites on which one meditates in the course of this contemplation of all that the mind desires. All these (apparitions) that emerge in this way are included in the genuine net of contemplation.[5]

ii. The interlinear commentary includes a teaching on the contemplation of the deity according to the creation and perfection stages and an exegesis of phenomenal existence as the seal of Samantabhadra.

[The former (comments on Ch. 5.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the three kinds of contemplation, i.e. those of reality (de-kho-na-nyid), universal appearance (kun-tu snang-ba), and causal basis (rgyu) according to utpattikrama. see also PP. 679, 771. and 851.

[2]:

Cf. below. Ch. 9. P. 782.

[3]:

"paralysis" (rengs-pa). On these four rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath, see below, pp. 783-786, 1258-1264.

[4]:

See above, Ch. 1, pp. 373-4, note 50, for the association between the five colours and the five elements; also below, pp. 1022-1044.

[5]:

Cf. Chs 11-13 below.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.13]

From skillful means emerges skillful means.

The unthinkable skillful means.

Not differentiated, it becomes differentiated

In the unthinkable inner and outer maṇḍalas.

This is a display of pristine cognition,

The supreme seal of fearless Samantabhadra.[13] ...

[Tibetan]

thabs-las thabs-byung thabs bsam-yas /

tha-dad min-las tha-dad-pa'i /

nang-dang nang-gi phyi-rol-gyi /

dkyil-'khor bsam-yas ye-shes rol /

'jigs-med kun-bzang phyag-rgya'i mchog / [13]

Commentary:

One's own mind-as-such appears as syllables of inner radiance. From (las) this natural appearance of skillful means (thabs), there emerges the skillful means (thabs-byung) through which syllables come forth from the points of the rays of light. Indeed, through countless emanations the skillful means (thabs) becomes unthinkable (bsam-yas) and immeasurable. This total transformation is not (min) actually differentiated (tha-dad) in an extraneous manner; but one intellectually meditates on oneself as a display of male and female deities, from which the display of mind then becomes differentiated (las tha-dad-pa'i) in the visualisation of the containing celestial palace and Buddha-field. During meditation therefore, there is an emanation & absorption of meditation in the countless unthinkable (bsam-yas) maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) arrayed by the mind among buddhas and sentient beings. These form the basis of Inner (nang) emanation and absorption where oneself appears as the deity and the syllables, and (dang) the outer (nang-gi phyi-rol-gyi) emanation and absorption of the celestial palace and Buddha-field created by the mind. However, this is a display (rol) in which self-manifesting pristine cognition (ye-shes) is itself arrayed. This nature of Buddha-hood is fearsome ('jigs) in all respects, inasmuch as it is mind-as-such pure from the beginning, and secured by the supreme seal of Samantabhadra (kun-bzang phyag-rgya'i mchog), the true abiding nature, who is primordially without (med) deeds and conflicting emotions. Since the creation stage is indeed spontaneously present in the perfection stage, without independent existence, one should become meditatively equipoised in this disposition and abide in the truth without conceptual elaboration.[1]

The latter, the exegesis on how phenomenal existence is secured by the seal of Samantabhadra (comments on the same verses as follows: From the skillful means (thabs-las) of inner radiance or mind-as-such which appears

as the syllables, there emerges the skillful means (thabs-byung) through which one's own real nature appears as the object and the (subjective) mind. Indeed, the unthinkable skillful means (thabs bsam-yas) arises, through which phenomenal existence diversely appears. These means however are not differentiated (tha-dad-min) objectively. This appearance which becomes diversely differentiated (las tha-dad-pa'i) arises in unthinkable maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor bsam-yas), namely, those of inner (nang) mind and (dang) of outer (nang-gi phyi-rol-gyi) phenomena of diverse flesh-coloured appearance. This is a display of pristine cognition (ye-shes rol), which is said to have been sealed by the supreme seal (phyag-rgya'i mchog) of primordial Buddha-hood, the fearless Samantabhadra ('jigs-med kun-bzang).

Furthermore, from the wheel of syllables which is skillful means, skillful means is emanated and absorbed, so that there is an unthinkable emanational skillful means associated with these syllables. But these are not differentiated from the mind. It is the intellect which fabricates phenomena, differentiating the source and object of their emanation. These (means) are the unthinkable maṇḍalas wherein all things of one's inner mind and the outer phenomena which appear to the mind are controlled by the emanation and absorption of syllables. Meditating on this display of pristine cognition, one connects with the meditation of the syllables called the supreme seal of fearless Samantabhadra.[2]

[iii. Synopsis of This Unique Meditative Equipose (222.5-224.1):]

[Thirdly (see p. 603), there is the synopsis (of this unique meditative equipose, which comments on Ch. 5.14):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4 on the integration of utpattikrama and sampannakrama in the path of rdzogs-pa chen-po: also below. Ch. 13, PP. 1001-1044. The visualised maṇḍala of the perfection stage is said to become spontaneously present "in the manner of a fish leaping from the water.

[2]:

The emphasis which kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa places on the rdzogs-chen content of this chapter is not accepted by exponents of the bka'-ma lineage, especially gYung-ston-pa rDo-rje dPal who, in order to present the gradualist structure of the path, was responsible for altering the exegetical order of the root-verses. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. Ch. 5, pp. 167ff., differentiates three interpretations which recognise different structures in Chs. 1-9 from the respective standpoints of "the essence which is to be realised" (rtogs-bya'i ngo-bo), the "means of realising it" (rtogs-byed thabs), and the "conclusive result" (mthar-phyin-pa'i 'bras-bu). Among them he attributes the second to gYung-ston-pa.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.14]

When one whose mind resembles an inebriated elephant's
Has been tamed by means of meditative equipoise,
And has become very stable in the mantras and their seals.
That one will obtain amazing great accomplishment. [14] ...

[Tibetan]

gang-gis glang-chen myos-'dra'i sems /
mnyam-par bzhag-pas btul-nas-su /
sngags-dang phyag-rgya rab-brtan-na /
dngos-grub ya-mtshan chen-por 'gyur / [14]

Commentary:

[Thirdly (see p. 603), there is the synopsis (of this unique meditative equipoise, which comments on Ch. 5.14):]

The one who would realise this garland of syllables has a mind (gems) which resembles that of an elephant (gang-gis glang-chen... 'dra-ba'i sems) enebriated (myos) by wine. He moves and suffers in saṃsāra, enebriated by the wine of reliance on unworthy egotistical views and symbolism. When (nas) this yogin's intellect which apprehends substances and signs has been tamed (btul) by means of meditative equipoise (mnyam-par bzhag-pas) in the truth of the abiding nature through tranquility and higher insight combined; and if he has then meditated on the extraordinary creation and perfection stages associated with non-dual pristine cognition, and has become very stable (rab-brtan-na) and experienced in its branches, namely, the reality of the mantras (sngags) and (dang) the nature of their seals (phyag-rgya), that one will obtain the amazing great accomplishment (dngos-grub ya-mtshan chen-por 'gyur), the nature of Samantabhadra.

The five branches of mantra are the realities of self, deity, secret mantra, recitation, and emanation and absorption. Tranquility is the quiescence of mental elaboration, and higher insight is the discriminative awareness which realises that objects are radiant and without Independent existence. In this context according to the creation stage, tranquility should be known as the mind not proceeding elsewhere and higher insight as the establishing of its nature without conceptual elaboration.[1]

It is said in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Despite analysis, there is no digression.

And:

With respect to any one object of reference.
The mind is established in contemplation.

Therefore, in this context, the contemplation of the syllables is the skillful means which gives rise to tranquility, and from its disposition the uncreated non-conceptual discriminative awareness and contemplation are both dispositionally accomplished. Hence its profundity.

The Lamp (for the Eye) of Contemplation (bsam-gtan [mig]-gi sgron-me) says:

Whoever relies on an object of reference
Thoroughly generates the non-referential.
Whoever relies on the non-referential
Attains the realisation called nothing-at-all.
One who experiences that called nothing-at-all
Subsequently abandons that as well.

[Conclusion of the Chapter (224.1-224.4):]

[The third part (see p. 603) is the conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 5.15):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"tranquility" (zhi-gnas, Sanskrit śamatha) and "higher insight" (lhag-mthong, Sanskrit vipaśyana). See below, pp. 1019-1020 & 1026, on the integration of these in rdzogs-pa chen-po. On the five branches of mantra, see also below, pp. 850-851.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 5.15]

... So saying, the Tathāgata himself was delighted by that vision. This completes the fifth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled The Contemplation that Attains the Magical Net. [15]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid gzigs-mos mnyes-par gyur-to / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las sgyu-'phrul [dra-ba] bsgrub-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-gyi le'u-ste lnga-pa'o / [15]

Commentary:

[The third part (see p. 603) is the conclusion of the chapter (which comments on Ch. 5.15):]

So saying (zhes brjod-pas) that the nature of all things abides in the cloud-mass of syllables, the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Samantabhadra himself (nyid) was delighted by that vision (gzigs-mos mnyes-par gyur-to) in which the excellent accomplishments emerged spontaneously from the wheel of syllables. This completes (-'o) and establishes the exegesis of the fifth chapter (le'u ste lnga-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) or wheel of the cloud-mass of syllables. Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa), where excellent accomplishments emerge, entitled (gyi) a teaching of the categories of the Contemplation that Attains the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba bsgrub-pa'i ting-nge-dzin) of the syllables.

The second section (of the general teaching on the nature of the three maṇḍalas of buddha-body, speech and mind, see p. 543) is the revelation of the maṇḍala of contemplation from the (cloudmass of syllables). It comprises a general teaching on the maṇḍala of the expanse or contemplation (Ch. 6) and a detailed exegesis of its branches, namely, the maṇḍalas of the mantras and seals (Chs. 7-8).

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Then all (deities) identified with this nature of all the Tathāgatas, neither single nor multiple, throughout the entire ten directions of the six world-systems, willed the maṇḍala of their own greatness to emerge, and then uttered these meaningful expressions. [1]

Pristine cognition is considered
In terms of the four directions and centre.
The unthinkable, spontaneous maṇḍala is Great Perfection,
And the yogin who realises this experiences
The origin of all in that great maṇḍala. [2]

On a four-spoked circle with its rim.
With an interior courtyard adorned by four corners.
And (forming) an entire quadrangle (is the palace)
With its embrasured gates. [3]

There is a diverse display, like a mass of clouds.
And it is adorned with forty-two maṇḍalas. [4]
The great thrones of the lion, the elephant.
The horse, the eagle and the bird.
With (their cushions of) sun, moon, lotus, and gems. [5]

On these seats, in the posture of the perfect (Buddhas)
And the posture of the spiritual warriors, [6]
There are the kings and queens of the circle,
Then, starting from the right, there are respectively
The one of sight, the one of hearing.
The one of scent, and the one of savour.
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
And in the corners between these are
The one of the eyes, the one of the ears.
The one of the nose, and the one of the tongue.
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
In the courtyard are revealed the six sages
And to the front and rear the pair who are
The active subject and the passive object.
At the four embrasured gates abide the subjugators
Along with the assembled host of their queens. [7]

With vajra, wheel, gemstone, Lotus, sword, and blazing bell.
Symbols such as the night lotus, the orange tree, and so on.
And delightful implements, beautifully held. [8]

Their (body-colours) are blue, white, yellow.

Scarlet, green, and various combinations of these.[9]
And they are supple, slender, handsome, upright, youthful.
Radiant, lustrous, resplendent, and charismatic. [10]

This great assembly which emanates light-rays
Is encircled by a blazing ring.
Pervasive without extremes or centre.
It is an unthinkable, spontaneously present maṇḍala. [11]

The supreme great seal of buddha-body
Without straying from the real expanse,
Emerges as the buddha-body of form
Which confers genuine liberation.
And in order to train living beings without exception.
It diversely reveals the appropriate Buddha-bodies.[12]

This teacher is a magical display or optical illusion,
A mode which essentially does not stray from the expanse.
But when diversified without straying,
He manifests in dissimilar, diverse (Buddha-bodies),
Corresponding to the different (classes of beings).
Although he is uncontrived by the real,
He appears distinctly through the residue of deeds,
As, for example, (images) on a mirror.
And the moon (reflected) in water. [13]

At this time, he is revealed
To all six classes of living beings
In forms which bring them to renounce negativity: [14]
To pious attendants in the form of an arhat, [15]
And to self-centred buddhas in the solitary way of a rhino. [16]

Moreover, according to the sequence of the supreme vehicle,
In the supreme unsurpassed abode of Akaniṣṭha,
The buddha-body (is present) as Vairocana,
Who, to retinuees of bodhisattvas, does not divulge
The supreme buddha-speech in that previous way,
But discloses through his buddha-body
The doctrines that are encountered. [17]

Just as (when) exposed on a mirror
All actual [actual?] sallowness (of complexion) can be removed,
When the retinue beholds the buddha-body in this way,
The Inestimable depth of their obscurations to enlightenment
Appears on the buddha-body, as on a mirror.
Then the ten levels are sequentially purified,
And unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained. [18]

The buddha-body of reality is inestimable and inexpressible.
The buddha-body of perfect rapture is an inexhaustible wish-fulfilling
gemstone.

There are inconceivable billions of emanational bodies. [19]

Perfect in all the major and minor marks,
The maṇḍala present throughout the perceptual range
Perfectly displays the two great provisions as well. [20]

As the supreme level of skillful means and discriminative awareness
It is inconceivably supreme in such ways. [21]

The buddha-body of the svāstika, without birth or death,
The one that abides in the field of all conflicting emotions.
The one that becomes an inexhaustible treasure,
The awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality.
The buddha-body of sameness indivisible in all respects.
And the buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things—
At this time all five buddha-bodies are indeed perfect. [22]

So saying, the inexpressible maṇḍala in all the infinite limitless ten
directions of the six world-systems became radiant in as many fields as
there are atoms.[23]

Then this secret description of these very maṇḍalas wherein the
Tathāgatas and the assembled host of their queens are without duality
emerged from the indestructible reality of buddha-body, speech, mind,
attributes and activities. [24]

Aho!
Without reference in terms of the object of reference
And the subject of reference, inestimable and inconceivable.
The maṇḍalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness
Are diverse and inexpressible.
Without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy
Throughout sameness and variety.
The expanse is pervaded.
The maṇḍalas, primordially and universally radiant,
Are emanated but not conceptually elaborated.
Ho!

Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged.
[25] This completes the sixth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive
With Respect To The Real, entitled Emanation of the Maṇḍala.[26]

Commentary (the maṇḍala of contemplation)—Introduction
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[Commentary (224.4-261.1):]

[The commentary (on Ch. 6—the maṇḍala of contemplation which
emerges from the cloud-mass of syllables) includes an overview and an
interlinear commentary.]

[Overview (224.5-229-2)]

The overview comprises a general explanation of the verbal definition of the term "maṇḍala" and a detailed teaching on its classifications. As to the former: The Tibetan dkyil-'khor, derived from the Sanskrit term "maṇḍala" means that the central deity (etso-bo) is encircled by a retinue ('khor).

The latter refers to the three maṇḍalas of the ground, path and result:

i. The maṇḍala of the ground Indicates that the containing world and its sentient contents attain Buddha-hood primordially—respectively in the nature of the celestial palace and of the deities. These (fundamentally) abide as the maṇḍala. Outer phenomena which appear as the elements primordially abide as the maṇḍala of the female consorts, inner phenomena which appear as the components abide as the maṇḍala of the male consorts, and all accumulated ideas and sensory activity fields abide as the maṇḍala of bodhisattvas or spiritual warriors of enlightenment.

It is said in this Secret Nucleus (Ch. 2, 2):

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality
Are known as the five perfect buddhas.

All the manifold activity fields and sensory bases

Are the nature of the maṇḍala of Bodhisattvas.

Earth and water are Buddhālocaṇā and Māmakī.

Fire and air are Pāṇḍaravāsini and Samayatārā.

Space is Dhātvīśvarī.

The three realms of existence are primordial Buddha (fields).

All things that there are, without exception.

Are not extraneous to the buddhas themselves.

Phenomena extraneous to the buddhas themselves

Have not been found by the buddhas themselves.

And in the Root Tantra of Cakrasaṃvara (T. 368):

These living beings abide in a naturally present maṇḍala.

Furthermore, appearances primordially abide as the maṇḍala of Buddha-body, sounds as the maṇḍala of buddha-speech, and all recollections and awareness as the maṇḍala of buddha-mind.

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

O! Concerning the nucleus or maṇḍala of buddha-body,
Arrayed by the All-Accomplishing King, teacher of teachers:

All that appears and abides in accordance with it

Is arrayed in the disposition of reality's uncreated expanse.

Concerning the nucleus or maṇḍala array of his buddha-speech:

All that resounds and abides in accordance with it

Are words arrayed as buddha-speech in the uncreated expanse.

Concerning the nucleus or maṇḍala-array of his awareness:

All the entire recollections, awareness and thoughts

Which are in accordance with it

Are aware of the uncreated All-Accomplishing One himself.[1]

This maṇḍala is itself revealed to be the basis of everything because It is primordially and spontaneously present.

The same text says:

O! The centre is the nucleus of unerring truth.

The periphery is endowed with the supreme bliss of saṃsāra and nirvana.

This is the basis of all essential maṇḍalas.

All maṇḍalas without exception are realised to be gathered therein.

ii. The second is the maṇḍala of the path which, when classified, has three aspects: There is the maṇḍala of illustrative images; the maṇḍala of genuine buddha-body, speech and mind; and a teaching on the classification of the threefold maṇḍala.

As to the first of these, it is said in the Cakrasaṃvara (T. 368):

The essence of the two artificial types (of maṇḍala)

Is that their description accords with the goal.[2]

In this context also, (the illustrative maṇḍalas) are entered by those of both dull and mediocre intelligence, and are established through the radiance of contemplation. Four sorts (of Illustrative maṇḍala) are indicated, two of which are essential and two subsidiary. These are respectively the maṇḍala drawn on cotton, the maṇḍala of coloured powders, and the incidental maṇḍalas of focal points and flower-clusters.
[3]

The same text also says:

There is the ritual for drawing (the maṇḍala).

And the sequence in which colours are applied on its lines.

As for the three maṇḍalas of (genuine) buddha-body, speech and mind: The first, the maṇḍala of buddha-body, is that in which the physical body becomes radiant as the deity, and is visually created (simply) as a single heruka (dpa'-bo gcig-pa) and so forth, as far as (elaborate creation of) the deities and a celestial palaces of the entire maṇḍala.[4]

This text also says (Ch. 9, 33-34):

...manifestly perfect

Throughout the ten directions and four times.

The Buddha-field, pure and unthinkable.

In which there is there is the celestial palace

Free from spatial dimensions,

With its ornamental (form) on the wheel.

And the assembly of its display,

Comprises all unthinkable maṇḍalas, without exception.

The maṇḍala of Buddha-speech refers to the mantra-syllables of the basic deity, surrounded by the mantras of the retinue, which are pronounced and visualised.

As this text says (Ch. 7.23):

Those (meanings) that are distinctly clarified are themselves
The supreme indestructible buddha-speech.

The maṇḍala of buddha-mind refers to the five poisons which are made into the path as the five pristine cognitions, so that saṃsāra is inherently pure without being renounced.

As (the Secret Nucleus. Ch. 6.2) says:

Pristine cognition is considered
In terms of the four directions and centre.
The unthinkable spontaneous maṇḍala is Great Perfection,
And the Yogin who realises this experiences
The origin of all in that great maṇḍala.

As for the teaching on the classification of the threefold maṇḍala, it comprises: the maṇḍala of the supporting celestial palace; the maṇḍala of the supported deities; and the maṇḍala of great non-dual pristine cognition.

The first of these is the excellent location, the maṇḍala in which the axis of the main (palace) is surrounded by a circumference of spatial array. The second is the excellent teacher, the maṇḍala of deities in which the central deity is surrounded by the assembled host of the retinue. The third is the maṇḍala of pristine cognition where naturally present pristine cognition is surrounded by the consciousness of recollection and awareness.

As is said in this same text:[5]

In the pristine cognition of the Great Identity
Are beheld the five pristine cognitions of the retinue.

And in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

O! I, the All-Accomplishing King, teacher of teachers.
All-pervasively enveloped, without coming or going.
By the uncreated maṇḍala of Bodhisattvas.
Penetrate through realisation the uncreated truth.

Now, the naturally present pristine cognition is the nature of Samantabhadra, the pristine cognition which abides in oneself without all the conceptual elaborations of the unstable subject-object dichotomy. The accumulated thoughts such as the five poisons which issue from its disposition are revealed to be the forty-two buddhas including the five Tathāgatas, and, as such, are pristine cognition in its state of energy. Thus awareness both in its abiding and emanational states is revealed as the

primordial maṇḍala. The Yogin who knows this is never separated from the origin of all things, the disposition of the great maṇḍala.

As for the maṇḍala of the result; When the path has been concluded and the rank of Samantabhadra then obtained, this state is described as the buddha-body and pristine cognition without conjunction or disjunction, in which the ground is directly liberated.

This (Secret Nucleus. Ch. 6.22) says:

And the buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things—
At this time, all five buddha-bodies are indeed perfect.[6]

The result therefore refers to the spontaneous presence of the buddha-body of reality, the buddha-body of perfect rapture, the maṇḍalas of the three buddha-bodies and five pristine cognitions, the five maṇḍalas of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities, and so forth.

[Interlinear Commentary (229.2-261.1)]

The Interlinear commentary includes a description of the causal basis for the emanation of the maṇḍala and an exegesis of the actual maṇḍala which is emanated thereby.

[The former (229.3-229.5, comments on Ch. 6.1):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The All-Accomplishing King (kun-byed rgyal-po) is a synonym for Samantabhadra or dharmakāya. See also Eva K. Dargyay, "A Preliminary Study of the Rñin-ma Text, Kun Byed Rgyal Po'i Mdo" in STC.

[2]:

The two artificial types (bcos-ma gnyis) are those maṇḍalas drawn on cotton and with coloured powders, which are Indicated in the following paragraph. They are so-called because they are held to be inferior to the body-maṇḍalas described below, Ch. 9, pp. 812ff.

[3]:

"maṇḍala drawn on cotton" (ras-bris-kyi dkyil-'khor), "maṇḍala of coloured powders" (rdul-tshon-gyi dkyil-'khor), "maṇḍala of focal points" (thig-gi dkyil-'khor), and "maṇḍala of flower-clusters" (tshom-bu'i dkyil-'khor).

[4]:

Tibetan dpa'-bo gcig-pa, Sanskrit ekavīra, refers to a single two-armed wrathful deity, without consort.

[5]:

N.L. However these verses are reminiscent of Ch. 13, section 8, 1. 5-6.

[6]:

In this context, the second line actually reads de-tshe sku-lnga lhun-gyis rdzogs. However cf. p. 675. de-tshe sku-lnga kun-kyang rdzogs: also see above, p. 204, note 41.

Text 6.1 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.1]

Then all (deities) identified with this nature of all the Tathāgatas, neither single nor multiple, throughout the entire ten directions of the six world-systems, willed the maṇḍala of their own greatness to emerge, and then uttered these meaningful expressions. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi rang-bzhin gcig-dang du-ma med-pa'i bdag-nyid thams-cad-kyis / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-la / nyid-kyi che-ba'i dkyil-'khor 'byung-bar bzhed-nas / ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (229.2-261.1)]

The Interlinear commentary includes a description of the causal basis for the emanation of the maṇḍala and an exegesis of the actual maṇḍala which is emanated thereby.

[The former (229.3-229.5, comments on Ch. 6.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of the cloud-mass of syllables had been arrayed, then (de-nas) all (thams-cad-kyis) deities who appear in the maṇḍala of Samantabhadra—he who is Identified (bdag-nyid) with the nature of all the (thams-cad-kyi rang-bzhin) self-manifesting Tathāgatas, neither single nor multiple (gcig-dang du-ma med-pa'i)—gazing throughout the entire ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-la) inhabited by those to be trained, willed the maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor... bzhed) the Tathāgatas' own greatness (nyid-kyi che-ba'i) to emerge and then (dbyung... nas) uttered (brjod-do) these meaningful expressions (ched-du brjod-pa 'di).

The latter (229.5-261.1) contains three parts; a general teaching on the

natural and spontaneous maṇḍala of the ground; a detailed exegesis of the contemplative or meditative maṇḍala of the path; and a synopsis of the maṇḍala of the resultant great pristine cognition.

[General Teaching on the Natural and Spontaneous Mandala of the Ground (229-6-230.4):]

[The first (comments on Ch. 6.2):]

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Text 6.2 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.2]

Pristine cognition is considered

In terms of the four directions and centre.

The unthinkable, spontaneous maṇḍala is Great Perfection,

And the yogin who realises this experiences

The origin of all in that great maṇḍala. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

ye-shes phyogs-bzhi dbus-brtags-te /
dkyil-'khor bsam-yas lhun-grub-ni /
rdzogs-chen rtogs-pa'i rnal-'byor-pas /
kun-'byung dkyil-'khor chen-por spyod / [2]

Commentary:

[General Teaching on the Natural and Spontaneous Mandala of the Ground (229-6-230.4):]

[The first (comments on Ch. 6.2):]

Pristine cognition (ye-shes) is considered (brtags-te) in terms of the four directions (phyogs-bzhi) because the (four) outer elements of earth, water, fire and air, the (four) inner components of form, feeling, perception, and habitual tendencies, and the four secret poisons of delusion, pride, desire, and envy are spontaneously present as the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, the pristine cognition of sameness, the pristine cognition of discernment, and the pristine cognition of accomplishment.[1] And it is considered in terms of the centre (dbus) because hatred, space, and consciousness, these three, abide as the mirror-like pristine cognition. The maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) wherein the five elements essentially abide as the five female consorts, the five components as the five male consorts, and the five poisons as the five pristine cognitions is unthinkable (bsam-yas). It is the natural Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen) inasmuch as all things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are spontaneously present

(lhun-grub-ni) from the beginning. The yogin who realises this (rtogs-pa'i rnal'byor-pas) should experience (spyod) all (kun) things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, in that great maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor chen-por) of pristine cognition, natural in origin (byung), without renunciation, acceptance, refutation or proof. Actually, whatever appears and whatever arises, all things are revealed as the display of this maṇḍala, without renunciation or acceptance.

[Detailed Exegesis of the Contemplative or Meditative Mandala of the Path (230.4-257.2):]

The second comprises both the actual maṇḍala of contemplation and an exegesis of the resultant maṇḍala accomplished thereby. The former (230.4-243.2) includes the maṇḍala of the supporting celestial palace and the maṇḍala of the supported deities; and the first of these (230.4-232.6) too has three aspects, namely, the celestial palace, its ornaments and thrones.

[i.The first (concerning the celestial palace comments on Ch. 6.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. earth, form and delusion are present as dharmadhātujñāna; water, feeling and pride are present as samatājñāna; fire, perception, and desire are present, as pratyavekṣanajñāna; and air, habitual tendencies and envy are present as kṛtyupasthānajñāna.

Text 6.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.3]

On a four-spoked circle with its rim.

With an interior courtyard adorned by four corners.

And (forming) an entire quadrangle (is the palace)

With its embrasured gates. [3] ...

[Tibetan]

'khor-lo rtsibs bzhi mu-khyud-bcas /
gru-chad bzhis brgyan bar-khyams-dan /
kun-tu gru-bzhi sgo-khyud-ldan / [3]

Commentary:

[Concerning the celestial palace]

Now, there is a four-spoked circle ('khor-lo rtsibs-bzhi) symbolising that ignorance has been cut through by the four pristine cognitions; along with (bcas) its rim (mu-khyud) which is white and circular, symbolising that ignorance Itself is the pristine cognition free from conceptual elaborations. Outside that, there is an interior courtyard (bar-khyams-dang) surrounding it on all sides which symbolises that pristine cognition is not limited or biased; adorned by four corners (gru-bzhis brgyan) to symbolise the four immeasurables. Around that, is the celestial palace forming an entire quadrangle (kun-tu gru-bzhi), indicating the extensive enlightened attributes of greatness.

It is endowed with embrasured gates (sgo-khyud-can) which symbolise the four kinds of liberation, and tiered pediments with eight units which represent the eight kinds of liberation exemplified in the former (four). in this context, the maṇḍala of the peaceful deities is clearly constructed with double gateways, as is disclosed in the words:[1]

With an interior courtyard adorned by four corners,
(Forming) an entire quadrangle with embrasured gates.

The shapes of both the outer and inner walls are thus indicated.

Strictly speaking, this (double wall) is visible because the buddha-body of perfect rapture appears within the gates while the emanational body appears in the outer courtyard. It is Indeed necessary for these maṇḍalas to be distinct. Otherwise the maṇḍalas of the buddha-body of perfect rapture which manifests in and of itself and that of the emanational body which appears to others would be confused, and the class of the maṇḍala could not be determined. Such flaws would occur.[2]

[ii. The second (concerning the ornaments, comments on Ch. 6.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Ch. 6, section 3. On the "four Immeasurables" and "four kinds of liberation," see above. Ch. 1, pp. 378-381.

[2]:

The point is that, if there was a single courtyard in which both sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya appeared, the maṇḍala could not be considered in terms of rang-snang and Ghanavyūha Akaniṣṭha.

Text 6.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.4]

There is a diverse display, like a mass of clouds.
And it is adorned with forty-two maṇḍalas. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

rol-mo sna-tshogs sprin-phung-bzhin /
dkyil-'khor bzhi-bcu gnyis-kyis brgyan / [4]

Commentary:

[Concerning the ornaments]

In order to symbolise the thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment, there is a diverse display (rol-mo sna-tshogs) of parasols, victory banners, and so forth which densely congregates like a mass of clouds (sprin-phung-bzhin). And it is adorned with the forty-two maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor bzhi-bcu gnyis-kyis brgyan) or different seats which beautify it, equal in number to the locations of the deities. There is no occasion for the deities themselves to be included among the ornaments of the celestial palace.

[iii. The third (concerning the thrones, comments on Ch. 6.5):]

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[Guhya garbha-Tantra, Text section 6.5]

The great thrones of the lion, the elephant.

The horse, the eagle and the bird.

With (their cushions of) sun, moon, lotus, and gems. [5] ...

[Tibetan]

seng-ge glang-chen rta-dang khyung /
nam-mkha'-lding-gi khri-chen-la /
nyi-zla padma rin-po-che / [5]

Commentary:

[Concerning the thrones]

In order to symbolise the four fearlessnesses and so forth, these seats comprise the great thrones (khri-chen) which are supported respectively by (representations) of the lion, the elephant, the horse, the eagle and the bird (seng-ge glang-chen rta-dang khyung nam-mkha' lding-gi), [1] along with (la) cushions (representing) the sun (nyi) of discriminative awareness, the moon (zla) of skillful means, and the lotus (padma) untainted by flaws.

These too are supported by myriads of gems (rin-po-che) because all that is desired emerges therefrom.

Now it is explained that (the thrones of) the five enlightened families have all five layers (of cushions), those of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra who are their glow have four layers, those of the spiritual warriors have three layers, while the six sages each have a lotus seat, and the gatekeepers each have a single sun-cushion.

It is said in the Sequence of Light (P. 4731):

In the centre of the main palace
Are the eight lions of fearlessness.
In the centre of the eastern (palace)
Is the elephant of great power.
In the southern (palace)
Are the eight horses of miraculous ability.
In the western palace is the peacock,
And in the northern (palace)
Are the eight civaṃcivaka of enlightened activity.
The basic thrones (of the conquerors) are embellished
With five layers including sun and moon-cushions.
Those of the spiritual warriors
Have three layers of sun, moon and lotus-cushions.
While the wrathful (gatekeepers) have a sun-cushion.
And the sages a single lotus-seat.
The male and female consorts Samantabhadra,
Who are the active subject and the passive object,
Have sun, moon, and lotus-cushions with extensive gems—
As such they are seated in meditative equipoise.

There is no contradiction (between these two descriptions) because the peacock and the eagle are said to have the same function, symbolising that the poisons have been pacified.[2]

As for the maṇḍala of the supported deities (232.6-243-2), it has six aspects:

[i. The first, which concerns their postures (comments on Ch. 6.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these thrones and the "four fearlessnesses", see above, Ch. 1, pp. 383-389.

[2]:

Cf. Ch. 1, where the western throne of Amitābha rests on a peacock (rma-bya), rather than an eagle (khyung).

Text 6.6 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.6]

On these seats, in the posture of the perfect (Buddhas)

And the posture of the spiritual warriors, [6] ...

[Tibetan]

gdan-la rdzogs-dang sems-dpa'i tshul / [6] ...

Commentary:

[As for the maṇḍala of the supported deities (232.6-243-2), it has six aspects:]

[i. The first, which concerns their postures (comments on Ch. 6.6):]

On these seats (gdan-la) (the deities) are seated in the posture of indestructible reality, which is that of the twelve perfect (rdzogs) buddhas or male & female consorts, namely, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra and the Tathāgatas who, in the manner of kings, are spontaneously accomplished in the two kinds of benefit.[1] They are also seated in the posture of the spiritual warriors (dang sems-dpa'i tshul), i.e. with the right leg extended and the left leg contracted, which is that assumed by the male & female consorts who are spiritual warriors, arrayed in the retinue in the manner of ministers.[2] Along with these, there is the outward gaze and the posture of vigorous gait assumed by the gatekeepers who, in the manner of field-m Marshals, eradicate obstructing and deviating forces;[3] and the standing posture[4] adopted by the sages who, in the manner of petty kings, appear among their respective classes of living beings in the form of a central deity.

[ii. The second, concerns which deities are present in which locations, (comments on Ch. 6.7):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Benefit of self and others (Tibetan rang-dang gzhan-don gnyis);
"posture of indestructible reality" (rdo-rje skyil-krung).

[2]:

"posture of the spiritual warriors" (sems-dpa' skyil-krung).

[3]:

"outward gaze and posture of vigorous gait" (phyir-gzigs-zhing gyad-kyi dor-thabs).

[4]:

"standing posture" (mi-bzhugs-par bzhenga-pa)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.7]

There are the kings and queens of the circle,
Then, starting from the right, there are respectively
The one of sight, the one of hearing.
The one of scent, and the one of savour.
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
And in the corners between these are
The one of the eyes, the one of the ears.
The one of the nose, and the one of the tongue.
Along with the assembled host of their queens.
In the courtyard are revealed the six sages
And to the front and rear the pair who are
The active subject and the passive object.
At the four embrasured gates abide the subjugators
Along with the assembled host of their queens. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

'khor-lo rgyal-po rgyal-mo-dang /
gYas-nas mthong-thos snom-pa-dang /
myong-dang btsun-mo'i tshogs-su bcas /
gru-chad-la-ni mthong-byed-dang /
thos-byed snom-byed myong-byed rnams /
btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang bcas-par gnas /
bar-khyams-la-ni thub-drug-dang /
mdun-dang rgyab-tu byed-pa-dang /
bya-ba-dag-ni gnas-par-bstan /
sgo-khyud bzhi-la 'joms-pa-ni /
btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang ldan-par gnas / [7] ...

Commentary:

[ii. The second, concernins which deities are present in which locations, (comments on Ch. 6.7):]

At the centre and on the four spokes of the main circle ('khor-lo) there are the kings (rgyal-po) or five male consorts beeginning with Vairocana, and (dang) the queens (rgyal-mo) or five female consorts. Then, starting

from the right (gYas-nas) or the south-eastern direction of the central deity (Vairocana) and at the extremities of the four spokes, there are respectively Kṣitigarbha, the one of sight (mthong); Vajrapāṇi, the one of hearing (thos); Akāśagarbha, the one of scent (snom-pa); and (dang) Avalokiteśvara, the one of savour (myong-dang); along with the assembled host (tshogs-su bcas) of their queens (btsun-mo'i), namely, Lāsyā, Mālyā, Gītā, and Nartī.

Similarly, in the (la-ni) four corners between these (gru-chad), starting from the south-east, there are (gnas) respectively Maitreya, the one of the eyes (mthong-byed-dang); Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin, the one of the ears (thos-byed); Samantabhadra, the one of the nose (snom-byed); and Mañjuśrī, the one of the tongue (myong-byed-rnams), along with (dang-bcas-par) the assembled host (tshogs) of their queens (btsun-mo'i), namely, Dhūpā, Puṣpā, Ālokā, and Gandhā, in a posture of embrace.

In the (la-ni) outer courtyard (bar-khyams) are the six eases (thub-drug) of the gods and so forth, whose respective abodes accord with the following description from the Sequence of Light (T. 4731):

In the south-east are the gods
In the south are the human beings.
In the south-west and north-west
Are the tormented spirits and animals respectively,
And in the north and north-east
Are the antigods and the denizens of hell respectively.

And (dang) to the front and rear (mdun-dang rgyab-tu) of the central deity there are revealed (gnas-par btsan) in the eastern and western directions of the inner courtyard the pair (dag-ni) who are the active male subject (byed-pa) and the passive female object (-dang bya-ba)—respectively Samantabhadra who activates the glow that arises, and Samantabhadrī who is the basis for the glow that arises. This is because all maṇḍalas are shown to arise from these two.[1]

Now, there are some who hold that these two are present to the rear and front of the central deity, some who hold that they lie to the east and west of the courtyard, and some who hold that they are within the heart-centre of the central deity. However these statements do not arrive at the definitive essence, which is as follows: in this context, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, who are the basis for the glow that arises, are explained to be in the courtyard. The male & female consorts Samantabhadra who are associated with the central deity of the maṇḍala are not differentiated (in this context) because they are themselves the five enlightened families. Also, when they are explained to be among the forty-two (deities), this refers to the description of the peaceful deities of the buddha-body of perfect rapture in their apparitional mode, and not to the teaching concerning the central deities who are the active subject and passive object. Then, when the male & female consorts Samantabhadra are visualised in the heart-centre of the central deity during contemplative meditation, this refers to the apparitional perfection stage. At that time when the mind apprehends the inner radiance of the nucleus, inner radiance is apprehended by meditation on the buddha-body of reality, the

male-female Samantabhadra, a full finger-span in size.[2]

As has previously been Indicated, the male & female Samantabhadra are present in the field of the buddha-body of reality because they are free from conceptual elaboration. Thence, in the spontaneous Bounteous Array which is the pristine cognition of sameness throughout the four times, the male & female consorts of the buddha-body of perfect rapture are present, forming the five enlightened families. And thence, in the world-systems of those to be trained, the natural expressions of Vajrapāṇi, Vajrasattva, the six sages and so forth are present. For example, in this Buddha-field the transcendent lord known as Śākyamuni was seen as the emanational body by pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, ordinary individuals, and those (Bodhisattvas) who were on the paths of provision and connection, but he was seen as the body of perfect rapture by sublime bodhisattvas and so forth.[3]

At the four embrasured sates (sgo-khyud bzhi-la), starting from the east, the subjugators ('joms-pa-ni) of the four demons, namely, the four wrathful deities Yamāntaka, Mahābala, Hayagrīva, and Amṛtakuṇḍalin, along with the assembled host (tshogs-dang ldan-par) of their queens (btsun-mo'i), namely, Aṅkuśā, Pāśā, Sphotā, and Gaṇṭhā, abide (gnas) in a display of the nine dramatic airs.

These nine dramatic airs are described as follows in the Garland of narration (klog-gi phreng-ba):[4]

Erotic, heroic, and ugly,
Wild, fierce, and terrifying.
Compassionate, awesome, and peaceful—
These nine dramatic airs are possessed.

At this Juncture, there are some agitated by the mirage of wrong view who have degenerated from genuine experience, and who are stranded in the desert sands of error, hard to traverse, saying that the central deity and the retinue are erroneous because Samantabhadra the teacher of this tantra has been ejected to the periphery of the maṇḍala, while Akṣobhya has been installed at the centre. in response to this there are some who say that (Samantabhadra) brings out the greatness of the retinue. Just as father Influences his child; and there are some who say that the (Samantabhadri), the passive object, is arrayed at the centre and (Samantabhadra), the active subject, then abides at the periphery, in the manner of a fortune-teller casting lots. And, there are yet others who say that Akṣobhya is depicted in the centre because in the situation of the ground the central deity is mirror-like, in the situation of the path he becomes the ground-of-all or basis of buddha-body and pristine cognition, and in the situation of the result the mirror-like pristine cognition is revealed as the central deity. However the excellent points made in all these statements have not been properly understood.[5]

It is not even certain that (a deity) will emerge at the centre because he is the expositor (of a particular tantra). Otherwise, Śākyamuni would implicitly emerge at the centre (of the maṇḍala) in the Magical Net of Mañjuśrī (T. 360) and in the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483),

whereas it is Vairocana and Jñānasattva who do respectively emerge. The central deities and retinues of these (tantras) would in that case be defective. In all maṇḍala of the Kriyātantras too, the sage (Śākyamuni) and Vajrapāṇi would implicitly emerge at the centre because they are the expositors, for which reason those (Kriyātantras) with Vairocana or Akṣobhya and their retinues as the central deities would be in error. Such implications could not be avoided.

Rather, it is the case that the male-female Samantabhadra arrayed in the courtyard is revealed as the basis for the glow that arises, but is never depleted as the central deity. Nor is Akṣobhya installed at the centre, because it is Vairocana, the deity of buddha-mind who is so depicted. Indeed, this very defect (of an erroneous central deity) does not exist because he himself is the teacher, the male-female Samantabhadra. You (sophists) are extremely deluded with regard to the resultant vehicle of indestructible reality. Since your intellects do not focus even on the merest description of (Samantabhadra) as the central deity and as the basis for (the glow) that arises, how can you contradict the meaning of these secret mantras? You should instead enter paths which have been revealed by cowherds![6]

[iii. The third aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deity) concerns the symbolic hand-implements which they hold. (It comments on Chapter 6.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan byed-pa-po kun-tu bzang-po gdangs-kyi 'char-byed-dang bya-ba-mo kun-tu bzang-mo gdangs-kyi 'char-gzhi. On this expression, in addition to the following explanation, see above, Ch. 1, p. 401-403 and notes 87-89.

[2]:

Tibetan tshon gang-ba.

[3]:

Cf. the above quoted passages, pp. 488-491, concerning the way in which the body-body is said to assume different appearances. kLong-chen-pa, p. 235.4, also reads 'phags-pa rnam-kyi instead of 'phags-pa rnam-kyis.

[4]:

This passage corresponds to Hevajra Tantra. II, v, 26.

[5]:

As kLong-chen-pa explains below, pp. 648-9, these statements confuse

the position of Samantabhadra as expositor, central deity and basis for the arising glow of the deities. On his controversial placement of Vairocana rather than Akṣobhya at the centre, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 399-401.

[6]:

Tibetan ba-lang rdzi-dag-gis bstan-pa'i lam. Cf. kLong-chen-pa's above remark, p. 578, note 29

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.8]

With vajra, wheel, gemstone, Lotus, sword, and blazing bell.
Symbols such as the night lotus, the orange tree, and so on.
And delightful implements, beautifully held. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

rdo-rje 'khor-lo rin-po-che /
padma ral-gri dril-bu 'bar /
ut-pal klu-shing la-sogs mtshan /
mdzes-tshul mnyes-pa'i yo-byad 'dzin / [8]

Commentary:

[iii. The third aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deity) concerns the symbolic hand-implements which they hold. (It comments on Chapter 6.8):]

Vairocana. the buddha-mind. to symbolise that emptiness and compassion are without duality, holds the vajra (rdo-rje) in his first or basic right hand. Akṣobhya similarly holds the wheel ('khor-lo) to symbolise that he has cut through the net of conflicting emotions and turns the doctrinal wheel.[1] Ratnasambhava holds the gemstone (rin-po-che) to symbolise that he fulfils the hopes of living beings and is spontaneously accomplished in enlightened attributes. Amitābha holds the lotus (padma) to symbolise that he has purified desire in the expanse and that his intention is directed with discernment towards living beings, and Amoghasiddhi holds the sword (ral-gri) to symbolise that he has cut through the conflicting emotions of living beings by means of the four kinds of enlightened activity, All of these (conquerors) hold the bell (dril-bu) in their basic or first left hand, in such a way that it embraces the female consort and presses her towards the heart. Their other (two pairs of hands) hold the hand-implements which have previously been indicated. [2]

The female consorts correspond to the male consorts in (the implements which they hold in) the right hand, and in the left hand also

they hold the bell (dril-bu), blazing ('bar) forth the light of pristine cognition's gems, and embracing their respective male consorts. There are some who maintain that there are no symbolic implements in the right hand of the female consort, but that is not discerned in the great means for attainment (mahāsādhana).

The symbolic hand-implements of the central deity (Vairocana) are also described as follows in the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833):

The vajra, the wheel and the blazing sword.
The bell, the lotus and the gemstone—
That is the sequence of Vajradhara's (implements).
(The hands) in which the others rest
Are known in relation to the vajra,
Which (is held) at the heart in the first (right hand)
While the (first) left hand embraces (the consort).

Accordingly. (Vairocana's) basic pair of hands embrace the female consort with the vajra and bell, his middle pair of hands hold the wheel and the lotus, while his outer pair hold the sword and the gemstone. The implements of the four other (conquerors) such as Akṣobhya should be similarly known.

Now, in general those symbolic hand-implements which have been sequentially described are of four types: those which are held with the right hand extended, those which are held with the left hand extended, those which are held with both hands equally extended. and those which are held with the surrounding hands extended.[3] This description generally accords with the (afore-mentioned) sequence of (implements, beginning with) the basic pair of hands.

Now, the male consorts have three faces and six hands, while their female consorts have one face and two hands. Some say that during ritual service (the male consort) has one face and two hands. but that is an inappropriate observation, clearly not taught in this tantra (of the Secret Nucleus).[4]

Concerning the symbolic hand-implements of the spiritual warriors, our text (Ch. 6.8) speaks of:

Symbols (mtshan) such as the night-lotus, the orange tree, and so on (la-sogs-pa).

Thus. Mañjuśrī holds the night-lotus (utpala) because he has renounced conflicting emotions. Maitreya holds the orange tree (klu-shing) because he has dispelled the fever of conflicting emotions. Kṣitigarbha holds a sprouting gemstone because he has brought forth the sprout of pristine cognition. Vajrapāṇi holds the vajra because he has subjugated suffering. Ākāśagarbha holds the sword because he has cut off the continuity of conflicting emotions. Avalokiteśvara holds the lotus because he is untainted by defective flaws. Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin holds the wheel of gemstone because he teaches the doctrine to sentient beings, and Samantabhadra holds the corn-ear of gemstones because he fulfils the

hopes of sentient beings.

And, as for their female consorts, there are delightful (mnyes-pa'i) implements (yo-byad) beautifully (mdzes-tshul) held ('dzin) by them: Vajralāsyā rests her clenched indestructible fists on her hips or holds a mirror, because she reveals all forms to be the essence of the real. Mālyā holds a garland of gems because she indicates that skillful means and discriminative awareness are not separated. Gītā holds a lute because she plays aloud the melody of the doctrine. Nartī holds a vajra and rings a bell in her (left) hand which moves up and down because she delights those to be trained. Dhūpā holds a censer because her scent of moral discipline satisfies (living beings), Puṣpā holds a basket of flowers because she indicates the branches of enlightenment. Ālokā holds a butter-lamp because she dispels the darkness of ignorance; and Gandhā holds a doctrinal conch of scented water because she washes the stains of propensities.

As for the six sages: Śatakratu holds a lute because he teaches the four affirmations of doctrine[5] to the gods. Vemacitra bears armour because he disciplines the antigods through fighting and disputation. Śakyamuni holds a begging bowl and a staff because he teaches the ten virtues to human beings. Sthirasīmha holds a book because he liberates the knot of foolishness and dumbness in animals. Jvālamukha holds a chest of gems because he dispels the hunger and thirst of tormented spirits. And the ox-headed Yama (a-va glang-mgo) holds fire and water because he discloses the misfortunes of the denizens of hell.

The male & female Samantabhadra hold no symbolic hand-implements because they illustrate that the expanse and the buddha-body of reality are free from conceptual elaboration. There are some who claim that they hold the vajra and the lotus, but they have not understood the pure nature of these deities.

As for the four male gatekeepers: Yamantaka holds a skull-topped cudgel because he subjugates the demon who is lord of death. Mahābala holds a vajra because he subjugates the demon of the components. Hayagrīva holds a skull and snakes because he subjugates the demon of conflicting emotions; and Amṛtakuṇḍalin holds a crossed-vajra because he subjugates the demon of the divine prince (of egotism). Their four female consorts respectively hold an iron hook, a lasso, an iron chain, and a bell in order to illustrate the four attractive qualities of a Bodhisattva and the four immeasurables.[6]

[iv. The fourth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerns the body-colours in which they appear. (It comments on Ch. 6.9):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The order of the hand-implements here would appear to agree with Lo-

chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. p. 185. who suggests that Akṣobhya should be at the centre since he holds the vajra, and Vairocana in the east since he holds the wheel. kLong-chen-pa himself agrees with this symbolism in Ch. 1, p. 397. in Ch. 8, however, as in the present context, he asserts that Vairocana, as the central figure, holds the vajra, while Akṣobhya in the east holds the wheel. He tries to resolve this problem, below, p. 650, by indicating that Vairocana holds the wheel as a secondary implement.

[2]:

The “four kinds of enlightened activity” (phrin-las bzhi) are identical to the four rites (las-bzhi), on which see below, pp. 783-786, 1258-1264. On the diverse hand-implements, see also above Ch. 1, p. 414, where the sword emblem of Amoghasiddhi is replaced by the crossed-vajra, and below, p. 650.

[3]:

"those held with the right hand extended" (Tibetan gYas-'gyed), "those held with the left hand extended" (gYon-'gyed), "those held with both hands equally extended" (mnyam-'gyed), and "those held with the surrounding hands extended" ('khor-'gyed).

[4]:

The author asserts that even in the preliminary step of ritual service (sevā), on which see above, p. 176. note 218, the fully mature form with three faces and six beads is visualised. The distinction between the simplified/causal and multiarmed/ resultant herukas is illustrated by an incident in the life of Zur-po-che (NSTB, Book, 2, Pt. 5, pp. 304-339), when sculptors are commissioned to make such Images.

[5]:

On the four affirmations of the doctrine (chos-kyi sdom bzhi, which Śatakratu taught to the devas of Tuṣita, namely, impermanence, suffering, emptiness & selflessness, and quiescence of nirvāṇa, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 16a-b; also below. Ch. 22, note 8.

[6]:

The four attractive qualities of a bodhisattva (bsdu-ba'i dngos-po bzhi) are liberality (sbyin-pa, Sanskrit dāna), affectionate speech (snyan-par smra-ba, Sanskrit priyavacana), purposeful activity (don-spyod-pa. Sanskrit arthacaryā). and agreement in purpose (don mthun-pa. Sanskrit samānavihāra). On the four immeasurables, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 378-381.

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Their (body-colours) are blue, white, yellow.
Scarlet, green, and various combinations of these. [9] ...

[Tibetan]

mthing-kha dkar-po ser le-brgan /
ljang-gu la-sogs sna-tshogs-pa'i / [9]

Commentary:

[iv. The fourth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerns the body-colours in which they appear. (It comments on Ch. 6.9):]

There are twenty-five (deities) who have body-colours corresponding to those of the enlightened families, and seventeen who have diversified body-colours. As to the former: There are five deities, namely, the male & female consorts Vairocana, the male & female consorts Samantabhadra, and the sage of the antigods, who are blue (mthing-kha) in colour to illustrate the unchanging reality of the enlightened family of Buddha-mind. The male & female consorts Akṣobhya, the male & female consorts Kṣitigarbha, and the sage of the gods are white (dkar-po) in colour to illustrate that the enlightened family of buddha-body is unmarred by defects. The male & female consorts Ratnasambhava, the male & female consorts Akāśagarbha, and the sage of human beings are yellow (ser) to illustrate the attributes of greatness belonging to the family of enlightened attributes. The male & female consorts Amitābha, the male & female consorts Avalokitesvara, and the sage of the tormented spirits are scarlet (le-brgan) or red in colour to illustrate that the enlightened family of buddha-speech is attracted through spirituality to living beings. The male & female consorts Amoghasiddhi, the male & female consorts Vajrapāṇi, and the sage of the animals are green (ljang-khu) in colour because the family of enlightened activity grants instruction through diverse actions.

The latter are (those deities) whose colours are various combinations of these (la-sogs sna-tshogs-pa'i) because they train living beings by means of many enlightened activities and attributes: The male & female consorts Maitreya are whitish-yellow. The male & female consorts Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin are reddish-yellow. The male & female consorts Samantabhadra are reddish-green. The male & female consorts Mañjuḥśa are whitish-green. The male & female consorts Yamāntaka are dark brown. The male & female consorts Mahābala are dark yellow. The male & female consorts Hayagrīva are dark red. The male & female consorts Amṛtakuṇḍalin are dark green; and the sage of the hells is smoke-coloured.

In this context, there are some who hold that the sage of the animals is either dark yellow or red, but they have not analysed the colour of the light within the energy centres (of the 30 body).

[v. The fifth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerning their style (comments on Ch. 6.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.10]

And they are supple, slender, handsome, upright, youthful.
Radiant, lustrous, resplendent, and charismatic. [10]

[Tibetan]

mnyen-lcug 'khril-ldem gzhon-tshul-can /
gsal-'tsher lhun-stug gzi-byin 'ldan / [10]

Commentary:

[v. The fifth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerning their style (comments on Ch. 6.10):]

These deities are supple (mnyen) in body and physically attractive because they have inherently purified birth. Their bodies are at ease because they have inherently purified sickness. and slender (lcug) because they are well-proportioned. Their bodies are handsome ('khril) in demeanour, without laxity, and quite upright (ldem) or erect because they have inherently purified death. Their bodies are soft ('jal sic!), youthful (gzhon tshul-can), and physically attractive in their disposition because they have inherently purified old age. These five are the essential attributes (of the buddha-body). As for their subsidiary attributes: The buddha-body has a most radiant (gsal) hue because it is immaculately adorned with major and minor marks: the buddha-body is bright and has a lustrous ('tsher) glow because it has perfected the consummation of the elements; the buddha-body is resplendent (lhun-sdug) because it is brilliant and pleasant; and highly charismatic (gzi-byin-ldan) because it overwhelms living beings. There are also some who claim that these (two sets of attributes) are respectively the five styles of the male consort, and the four styles of the female consort.[1]

[vi. The sixth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerning their emanation of light-rays (comments on Ch. 6.11):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. p. 189, speaks of these

as the nine styles of the peaceful deities (zhi-ba'i tshul dgu), and describes the first set of five as "essential attributes" (ngo-bo'i yon-tan) and the second set of four as their "secondary attributes" (rnam-pa 'i yon-tan).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.11]

This great assembly which emanates light-rays

Is encircled by a blazing ring.

Pervasive without extremes or centre.

It is an unthinkable, spontaneously present maṇḍala. [11] ...

[Tibetan]

'od-zer 'phro-ba'i tshogs chen-po /
'bar-ba'i phreng-bas 'khrigs-ba-ste /
mtha'-dbus med-par khyab-pa-yi /
dkyil-'khor bsam-yas lhun-gyis grub / [11]

Commentary:

[vi. The sixth aspect (of the maṇḍala of the supported deities) concerning their emanation of light-rays (comments on Ch. 6.11):]

This great assembly (tshogs chen-po) of light-rays which emanates ('phro-ba'i) countless billion-billions of light-rays ('od-zer)[1] in the ten directions from the six great energy-centres within the bodies of these deities and from all their pores too, is visible without limitation. Now, the six centres are those of the crown, the point between the eyebrows, the throat, the heart, the navel, and the soles of the feet. Therefrom are emanated the light-rays which are of six colours, namely, blue, yellow, red, white, madder, and crystal. Madder is scarlet or light-red, while crystal is bluish-white in colour and translucent. The nature of the buddha-body's inner radiance is such that it emanates these six (colours from) the six respective (centres) into the ten directions, along with a blllllon-bllllion concomitant rays of light.[2]

The male & female gatekeepers are present in an awesome guise in the midst of this throng, which is encircled ('khyil-ba-ste) in the ten directions by a ring (phreng-bas) of fire in the midst of a blazing ('bar-ba'i) expanse, like the conflagration at the end of an aeon. Because it appears in this way, pervasive (khyab-pa-yi) in the expanse of space without extremes or centre (mtha'-dbus med-par), it is a maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of contemplation, a beyond number and measure, unthinkable (bsam-yas) and spontaneously present (lhun-gyis grub) in nature. Meditating thereon, one becomes extensive in the manner of reality's expanse, and turns to the essence of genuine pristine cognition.

The latter aspect (of the contemplative maṇḍala of the path: 243.2-257.2) is an exegesis of the resultant maṇḍala accomplished thereby. It comprises an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview (243-2-248.4):]

The overview has three aspects, namely, the structure of the supporting buddha-body, the structure of the supported pristine cognition, and the structure of deeds or enlightened activity.

i. The Buddha-body is fivefold, among which the buddha-body of reality is free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration.

Concerning it, this text (Ch. 6, 19) says:

The buddha-body of reality is inestimable and inexpressible.

The buddha-body of perfect rapture is a treasure-store in which all enlightened attributes are spontaneously present (Ch. 6.19):[3]

The buddha-body of perfect rapture is an inexhaustible precious treasure.

The emanational body teaches each in accord with his or her needs (Ch. 6.19):

There are inconceivable billions of emanational bodies.

The body of awakening is the Buddha-hood in which all things are equally and perfectly united (Ch. 6.22):

The Buddha-body of sameness indivisible in all respects.

And the unchanging body of indestructible reality is the nature of Buddha-body and pristine cognition, without conjunction or disjunction (Ch. 6.22):

The awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality.

ii. The second (the structure of the supported pristine cognition) is fivefold. including the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. Concerning these (Ch. 6.22) speaks of:

The buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things.

iii. The third. the enlightened activities. include both the buddha-body's manifestation and doctrinal teaching on behalf of those to be trained, and its resulting array of maturation and liberation.

As to the former: The teachers who grant their respective instructions to ordinary living beings diversely appear. and teach the doctrine in which virtue is outlined. Then, to pious attendants and self-centred buddhas they appear as an arhat and teach the doctrine which satisfies them. Although

self-centred buddhas do not teach the doctrine verbally, they do teach symbolically.

As is said in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 35 3786, Ch. 2, v. 7):[4]

This means that to those respective persons
Who require training.
Whatever they wish to hear.
The respective meanings just appear.
Without even a sound being uttered.

Similarly, there is the instruction granted by the supreme emanational body, as when buddhas such as Śākyamuni perform acts of benefit and teach the doctrines of diverse vehicles.

Then, to bodhisattvas of the tenth level, they appear in Akaniṣṭha as the glorious Vairocana who dispels the obscurations of the ten levels. The latter too reveals the doctrine of Buddha-body without teaching by means of Buddha-speech.

As is said in the Sūtra of the Awakening of the Doctrine And its Rapture (chos-dang longs-spyod mngon-par byang-chub-pa'i mdo):

The master of Akaniṣṭha, lord of doctrine.
Transcendent lord Vairocana,
Through meditative equipoise
That is unwavering and unspoken...

The Buddhas' deeds are inconceivable. For example, in the Buddha-field of Gandamādana (spos-kyi yongs-gang brtsegs-pa) when bodhisattvas draw near the great Tree of Perfume, the contemplation of the approach to liberation arises in the mental continuum of these Bodhisattvas just through the sensation of that tree's scent.[5]

Similarly, it is found in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

In certain world-systems the buddhas' deeds are furthered by the eating of food, in some by the wearing of religious robes, in some by the spectacle of the buddha-body, in some by the dreaming of dreams and so forth. This is inconceivable.

Therefore, the Buddha-body of perfect rapture manifests and acts on behalf of bodhisattvas of the tenth level. The supreme emanational body does so on behalf of pious attendants, selfcentred buddhas, and those on levels experienced through volition (adhimuktibhūmi).[6] The ordinary forms and so forth appear and act on behalf of sentient beings of impure deeds.

The latter, i.e. the resultant activities which are an array of maturation and liberation on behalf of those to be trained, have three aspects: those activities arrayed as a support for the path, those arrayed as the path, and those arrayed as the result of the path.

The first are those which guide one from evil destinies, and establish one on the rank of celestial gods and human beings.

The second, activities arrayed as the path, are threefold, namely, those arrayed on the path of pious attendants, on the path of self-centred buddhas, and on the path of the greater vehicle. The greater vehicle also comprises both the causal vehicle of dialectics and the resultant vehicle of secret mantras. in the former case. after the two kinds of mental attitude have been cultivated and the (paths of) provision and connection (have been traversed), the ten levels are refined through the ten perfections on the two paths of Insight and meditation. Thus renunciation is depicted as the abandoning of (the path of) insight and the abandoning of (the path of) meditation.[7] In the latter case. through maturational empowerment and liberating meditation according to the creation and perfection stages, one abides on the provisional levels of the three kinds of awareness-holder.[8]

The third, activities arrayed as the result of the path, refers to the enlightened activities or deeds which are arrayed on the six (higher) levels of Universal Light, Lotus Endowed, Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables, Supreme Bliss, Holder of Indestructible Reality, and Undifferentiated Samantabhadra.[9] These are the names applied to aspects of enlightened attributes, including the appearance. emptiness, and pristine cognition of the buddha-level, but they are not traversed in a hierarchical gradation of distinct and different (levels). Universal Light is so called because thereon the emanational body performs acts of benefit through qualitative and quantitative knowledge. Lotus Endowed is so called because the buddha-body of perfect rapture appears. Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables is so called because the cloudmass of syllables is emanated. Supreme Bliss is so called because one is present in the expanse of supreme bliss. Holder of Indestructible Reality is so called because it is the highest of all conclusive goals: and Undifferentiated Samantabhadra is so called because all these (levels) are indivisible. The expression "beyond the level of Universal Light" is intended simply with reference to the buddha-body of form. over and above the buddha-body of reality, which manifests and performs acts of benefit.

Incidentally, the appendices ('phyong) are explained as follows: It is held that in this sixth chapter (of the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus) there is the appendix of Buddha-body in thirteen pādas beginning with the verse The supreme great seal of Buddha-body (Ch. 6.12). in the seventh chapter there is the appendix of buddha-speech in twenty-one pādas beginning with the verse From the Magical Net, supreme among tantras (Ch. 7.19). In the eighth chapter there is the appendix of buddha-mind in four pādas beginning with the verse If the supreme provision of the great seal is encountered (Ch. 8.20). in the eleventh chapter there is the appendix of attainment in twenty-two pādas starting from the verse For genuine accomplishment, the mantrin...onwards (Ch. 11.24). And in the twentieth chapter there are twenty-four pādas known as the appendix of enlightened activity, beginning from the line The main part of the rite in which the wrathful deities are attained is this which follows (Ch. 20.16-20).

Then, there are some who hold that the three appendices of buddha-

body, speech and mind derive from the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters respectively, that there is an appendix of enlightened attributes in eight pādas derived from the ninth chapter which begins with the verse and manifestly perfect throughout the ten directions and four times (Ch. 9.33-34). that there is an appendix of enlightened activities in five pādas derived from the thirteenth chapter beginning with the verse In the maṇḍala which is perfect in pristine cognition (Ch. 13.14). and that there is an appendix of commitments in four pādas derived from the nineteenth chapter which begins with the verse These commitments are most amazing (Ch. 19.20).

There are also some who hold that, in addition to the five appendices of Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, there is an appendix of offerings in four pādas derived from the ninth chapter which begins with the verse In the Palms of the great seal (Ch. 9. 2-3).

Now, certain persons hold that these appendices are absent in this root tantra (of the Secret Nucleus) but were extracted from other texts in the cycle of the Magical Net and inserted into their respective chapters by rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and that (the versions of the text) were divided by gTsong-rum Rin-chen gZhon-nu into those which have appendices and those which do not.

Again, there are some who hold that the version without the appendices was translated by gNyags Jñānakumāra, and that the version with appended passages had them inserted into the translation by rMa Rin-chen-mchog. There are even some who say that rMa himself concealed them out of envy at La-gsum rGyal-ba Byang-chub. But the truth of the matter is that the appendices are lacking in both the earliest translation made by Buddhaguhya and Vairocana, and in the intermediate translation which was made by Vimalamitra, gNyags Jñānakumāra, and rMa Rin-chen-mchog. Therefore it is clear that the Sanskrit manuscripts themselves had a number of redactions. Should anyone wish to know that this is the case, the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8) itself had a number of manuscripts, extant in the three redactions of the parivrājika gZo-sbyangs, 'Preng-ba-can, and sDe-can; and in certain texts such as the Sitātāpatrā (T. 592) a number of redactions is similarly found. Therefore it is not certain that these (variant passages) were inserted by the Tibetans. One should know that the discrepancies in the translations of this tantra were to be found in the Sanskrit manuscripts. Numerous redactions of Sanskrit manuscripts occur because there is a distinction between those (versions) in which the meaning is clearly expressed and those in which it is not.

[Interlinear Commentary (248.4-257.2):]

The interlinear commentary (on the resultant maṇḍala—see p. 657) has four parts: The arising of the resultant buddha-body; the performance of enlightened activity derived therefrom; the liberation of living beings thereby; and the appearance of wondrous omens.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 6.12):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan 'od-zer bye-ba khrag-khrig.

[2]:

These brilliant purificatory colours diffused from the six centres of the deities are distinguished from the lustreless colours of the seed-syllables within the corresponding centres of sentient beings, which are respectively dull white, yellowish green, pale blue, dark red, smoke grey, and black. See 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, khrid-yig ye-shes bla-ma. p. 6b.

[3]:

On the different readings for this verse, see above, p. 203, note 34.

[4]:

On this verse, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, P- 126b, and below, pp. 667-668.

[5]:

Cf. the description of Gandhamādana and its tree (aśokavṛkṣa) in Divyāvadāna, p. 157.

[6]:

I.e. the paths of sambhāramārga and prayogamārga. See above. Ch. 1, note 39. Ch. 3, pp. 506-507 & note 5.

[7]:

I.e. the aśaikṣamārga, surpassing these two paths, is reached through the causal vehicles. On the pañcamārga. see Sgam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament Liberation, pp. 232-238; also see above, pp. 506-513 and corresponding notes; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3

[8]:

The three provisional kinds of awareness-holder are those of maturation (rnam-smin), power over the lifespan (tshe-dbang), and the great seal (phyag-chen). See also below, pp. 810-811, 959-974, 1247-1248.

[9]:

Tibetan kun-tu 'od, padma-can, yi-ge 'khor-lo tshoga-chen, bde-ba chen-po, rdo-rje 'dzin-pa, and kun-tu bzang-po dbye-ba med-pa'i sa. The last of these or sixteenth buddha-level is also known as ye-shes bla-ma, on which see p. 141, note 51. On these higher or resultant levels, see also below, pp.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.12]

The supreme great seal of Buddha-body
 Without straying from the real expanse,
 Emerges as the Buddha-body of form
 Which confers genuine liberation.
 And in order to train living beings without exception.
 It diversely reveals the appropriate Buddha-bodies. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

sku-yi phyag-rgya che-mchog-ni /
 de-bzhin dbyings-las ma-gYos-kyang /
 yang-dag thar-pa'i gzugs-sku-dang /
 'gro-ba ma-lus gdul-ba'i phyir /
 mthun-byas sku-ni sna-tshogs ston / [12]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (248.4-257.2):]

The interlinear commentary (on the resultant maṇḍala—see p. 657) has four parts: The arising of the resultant buddha-body; the performance of enlightened activity derived therefrom; the liberation of living beings thereby; and the appearance of wondrous omens.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 6.12):][1]

The supreme great seal (phyag-rgya che-mchog-ni) is the nature of the buddha-body (sku-yi) of reality's expanse. This buddha-body of reality is the essence of all buddha-bodies. the Buddha-hood manifestly attained in the nature of space, free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. As for its conclusive accomplishment: Without straying from (-las ma-gYos kyang) the real expanse (de-bzhin-dbyings) or reality itself, it is the basis from which the other buddha-bodies arise. From that disposition, it emerges as the buddha-body of form (gzugs-sku) which confers genuine liberation (yang-dag thar-pa' i) from the twofold obscuration and its propensities.[2] This (body of form) includes the buddha-body of perfect rapture adorned by excellent major and minor marks, and (dang) the appropriate (emanational) buddha-bodies (mthun-byas sku-ni) including universal monarchs, whores, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and material objects which it diversely reveals (sna-tshogs ston) in order to train (gdul-ba'i phyir) the respective minds of living beings ('gro-ba) [without exception (ma-lus)] through a diffusion of its spirituality and in accordance with their aspirations.

ii. The second comprises both the similes for the appearance of enlightened activity which does not stray from the expanse, and the appearance of enlightened activity for the sake of those to be trained.

[The former (comments on Ch. 6.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As stated above, p. 662, this section is known as the appendix (phyong) of buddha-body in thirteen pādas.

[2]:

Tibetan sgrib-gnyis bag-chags-bcas-pa. On the twofold obscuration, see above, p. 324, note 13.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.13]

This teacher is a magical display or optical illusion,
A mode which essentially does not stray from the expanse.
But when diversified without straying,
He manifests in dissimilar, diverse (Buddha-bodies),
Corresponding to the different (classes of beings).
Although he is uncontrived by the real,
He appears distinctly through the residue of deeds,
As, for example, (images) on a mirror.
And the moon (reflected) in water. [13] ...

[Tibetan]

ston-nyid sgyu-ma mig-yor tshul /
tshul-nyid dbyings-las gYos-pa-med /
ma-gYos bzhin-du sna-tshogs-pa'i /
de-tshe mi-mthun sna-tshogs-la /
so-so 'dra-bar snang-ba-ni /
de-bzhin-nyid-las ma-bcos-kyang /
las-'phro'i dbang-gis so-sor snang /
dper-na me-long chu-zla-bzhin / [13]

Commentary:

For the sake of those to be trained, this teacher (ston-nyid) of diverse emanations relatively is a magical display or optical illusion (sgyu-ma mig-

yor tshul), which in the manner of a shadow is not concretely recognised from the moment it appears. Ultimately however, he has an uncreated and primordially pure disposition or mode (tshul) which does not stray from the expanse (dbyings-las gYos-pa med) of reality because it is essentially (nyid) without conceptual elaborations. But when (de-tshe), without straying (ma-gYos bzhin-du) the diversified (sna-tshogs-pa'i) forms of the emanational body appear differently in the perception of living beings, he manifests (snang-ba-ni) in diverse (sna-tshogs-la) buddha-bodies of dissimilar (mi-mthun) form, including kings and brahmans, and including peaceful and wrathful deities, corresponding to ('dra-bar) the different (so-so) classes of beings to be trained. Although he does not stray from (-las ma-gYos kyang) the expanse of the real (de-bzhin-nyid), the buddha-body of reality, he appears distinctly (so-sor snang) through the (dbang-gis) respective fortunes of living beings and their residue of ('phro'i) past deeds (las)—to terrestrial beings he appears as emanations of natural expression, to some living beings as emanations which train living beings, to some as impure emanations, to some as the diversified emanational body, and so forth. It is as (bzhin), for example (dper-na), when the image of one's complexion appears on the surface of a mirror (me-long) although the complexion itself does not change, and when in a pool of water the moon of the sky appears as the moon reflected in water (chu-zla) although the moon itself does not change.

Accordingly, it says in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Just as the moon, without changing from the expanse.
Appears in a pool of water.
Without wavering from the real
There are inconceivable billions of emanations.
To some the Buddhas are slightly revealed.
To some they are manifoldly and extensively (revealed).
And to some the fields are revealed as emptiness.

[The latter (the appearance of enlightened activity for the sake of those to be trained) has four parts (which comment on Ch. 6.14-17):]

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Text 6.14-17 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.14-17]

At this time, he is revealed
To all six classes of living beings
In forms which bring them to renounce negativity: [14]
To pious attendants in the form of an Arhat, [15]
And to self-centred Buddhas in the solitary way of a rhino. [16]
Moreover, according to the sequence of the supreme vehicle,
In the supreme unsurpassed abode of Akaniṣṭha,

The Buddha-body (is present) as Vairocana,
Who, to retinues of Bodhisattvas, does not divulge
The supreme Buddha-speech in that previous way,
But discloses through his Buddha-body
The doctrines that are encountered. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

de-tshe 'gro-drug thams-cad-la /
sdig-spong gzugs-su rnam-par bstan / [14]
nyan-thos-rnams-la dgra-bcom-gzugs / [15]
rang-rgyal-rnams-la bse-ru'i tsul / [16]
gzhan-yang theg-mchog rim-pa-bzhin /
'og-min bla-med gnas-mchog-tu /
sku-ni rnam-par snang-mdzad-tshul /
byang-chub sems-dpa'i 'khor-rnams-la /
de-bzhin gsung-mchog mi-smra-ste /
sku-yis chos-rnams mjal-bar ston / [17]

Commentary:

[The latter (the appearance of enlightened activity for the sake of those to be trained) has four parts (which comment on Ch. 6.14-17):]

i. The first part concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of the six ordinary classes of living beings:

At this time (de-tshe) when Buddha-hood is attained in the spontaneous Bounteous Array without conjunction or disjunction in respect of the three buddha-bodies, he is revealed (rnam-par-bstan) to all (thams-cad-la) the ordinary six classes of living beings (gro-drug) including the gods, as the different sages such as Śatakratu. i.e. in forms which bring them to renounce (spong gzugs-su) the negativity (sdig) of their minds; and then he teaches the doctrines which purify the obscurations of gods, humans, and so forth.

ii. (The second) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of pious attendants:

He appears in the guise of a virtuous ascetic and, to (rnams-la) those living beings who are to be trained and who belong to the family of pious attendants (nyan-thos), he is revealed in the form of an arhat (dgra-bcom gzugs), (foremost) among pious attendants, who then establishes them in the realisation of the four truths.[1]

It is said in the Sutra Requested By the Emanational King (T. 167):

To those who are to be trained by pious attendants, he becomes present and teaches the doctrine in the form of a pious attendant.

iii. (The third) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of self-centred Buddhas:

In order to grant instruction through the form of the self-centred buddhas, to (la) adherents of the vehicle of the self-centred buddhas (rang-rgyal-rnams), he teaches the doctrine of dependent origination symbolically in the solitary way of a rhino (bse-ru'i tshul).[2]

As the same text says:

To those who are to be trained by the form of a self-centred buddha, he becomes present in the form of a self-centred buddha, and genuinely teaches through symbols the doctrine of dependent origination.

iv. (The fourth) concerns the appearance (of enlightened activity) for the sake of adherents of the greater vehicle:

Moreover (gzhan-vang), in addition to these, he appears differently to spiritual warriors of the tenth level whose sequence (rim) of acumen is according to (bzhin) the supreme vehicle (theg-mchog), in the supreme (mchog-tu) unsurpassed abode of Akaniṣṭha ('og-min bla-med gnas), the excellent abode of the mighty lord, which is superior among the form-realms. the teacher himself or the buddha-body (sku-ni) is present as Vairocana (rnam-par snang-mdzad tshul), who, to retinues of Bodhisattvas (byang-chub sems-dpa'i 'khor-rnams-la) of the tenth level, forming the excellent retinue, teaches the greater vehicle which is the excellence of doctrine during (the time of) unchanging sameness, which is the excellence of time.

Now, the teacher who is himself the buddha-body of perfect rapture does not divulge (mi-smra-te) the doctrines as (supreme) buddha-speech (gsung-mchog) in that previous way (de-bzhin) in which the emanational body appears to different living beings and verbally teaches the doctrine. But he discloses (ston) through (yis) the essence of his apparitional buddha-body (sku) the doctrines (chos-rnams) of the greater vehicle that are encountered (mjäl-bar) in the intellects of the retinue.[3]

The third part (see p. 664) concerns the liberation of living beings through these (activities). This comprises both the refinement of obscurations according to the causal path, and the supreme attainment of the resultant buddha-body and level.

[The former (comments on Ch. 6.18):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On Śrāvakas and Arhats, see above, Ch. 3, pp. 506-508. On the four truths (bden-pa bzhi), namely, duḥkhasatya, samudayasattva [samudayasatya?], nirodhasatya, and mārgasatya, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, PP. 123a-124b, and glossary of enumerations under "four truths," and on their interpretation according to the resultant or mantra vehicles, *ibid.*, Pt. 4, p. 143b.

[2]:

On Pratyekabuddhas, see also above, pp. 508-509, esp. note 65.

[3]:

The meaning of this disclosure is clarified in the following paragraphs, pp. 669-670.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.18]

Just as (when) exposed on a mirror
All actual [actual?] sallowness (of complexion) can be removed,
When the retinue beholds the Buddha-body in this way,
The inestimable depth of their obscurations to enlightenment
Appears on the Buddha-body, as on a mirror.
Then the ten levels are sequentially purified,
And unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

me-long bstan-pa'i tshul bzhin-du /
dngos-kyi mdog-ngan thams-cad sel /
'khor-gyis de-bzhin sku bltas-na /
byang-chub sgrib-pa gting-dpag-med /
me-long bzhin-du sku-la snang /
de-nas sa-bcu rim-gyis 'byang /
bla-med byang-chub yang-dag 'thob / [18]

Commentary:

[This has two sections of which (the first) is illustrative:]

(The action of this liberation) resembles (that) just as (bzhin-du) when one's face is exposed on a mirror (me-long bstan-pa'i tshul) and stains are seen by regarding one's own countenance on it, so that all sallowness (mdog-ngan thams-cad) of the actual (dngos-kyi) countenance, tainted by blemishes, can be washed and removed (sel).

[(The second) is meaningful:]

When (na) the retinue ('khor-gyis) of spiritual warriors of the tenth level beholds the Buddha-body (sku bltas) of the teacher, i.e. the Buddha-body of perfect rapture, in this (de) illustrative way (bzhin), the depth (gting) of their obscurations to enlightenment (byang-chub sgrib-pa) along with their gross, mediocre, and subtle blemishes which are difficult to estimate (dpag), and cannot (med) be measured, appear on the Buddha-

body (sku-la snang) of perfect rapture, as (bzhin-du) blemishes appear on a mirror (me-long).

Then (de-nas) these spiritual warriors persevere in order to purify the blemishes of their respective levels: On the first level envy is purified. On the second level confusion with respect to moral discipline is purified. On the third level anger is purified, on the fourth idleness, on the fifth instability, on the sixth confusion with respect to discriminative awareness, on the seventh ignorance of skillful means, on the eighth obscuration with respect to power whereby the benefit of sentient beings is not accomplished, on the ninth the failure to achieve one's aspirations, and on the tenth level ignorance and its subtle seeds are purified.[1] Once the ten transcendental perfections and the levels have been completely refined by that purification, the blemishes of the ten levels (sa-bcu) are sequentially purified (rim-gyis 'byang), and unsurpassed enlightenment is genuinely obtained (bla-med byang-chub yang-dag 'thob).

At the end of the continuum of the ten levels, the empowerment of great light rays is conferred,[2] as is said in the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Having obtained the end of meditation.
The empowerment of great light rays is conferred.

Accordingly, when such a spiritual warrior makes offerings to all the buddhas, great rays of light emerge from between the eyebrows of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions, and then vanish into the crown centre of that spiritual warrior, whereby the vajra-like contemplation is obtained and Buddha-hood is achieved.

The latter has three aspects, namely, a general teaching on the perfection of buddha-body and pristine cognition in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; a detailed exegesis of the perfection of the levels; and a synopsis of the spontaneous presence of the five buddha-bodies.

[i. This has two parts, of which the first concerns the obtaining of the three buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction. (It comments on Ch. 6.19):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the causal interpretation of these ten levels, see also below, pp. 964-968, pp. 1011ff.

[2]:

On this 'od-zer chen-po'i dbang-bskur. which concludes the path of the causal vehicles, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 62.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.19]

The Buddha-body of reality is inestimable and inexpressible.

The Buddha-body of perfect rapture is an inexhaustible wish-fulfilling gemstone.

There are inconceivable billions of emanational bodies. [19] ...

[Tibetan]

chos-sku dpag-med brjod-du-med /

longs-spyod [/spyod] zad-med yid-bzhin [/rin-chen] gter /

sprul-pa bye-ba bsam-mi-khyab / [19]

Commentary:

[i. This has two parts, of which the first concerns the obtaining of the three buddha-bodies without conjunction or disjunction. (It comments on Ch. 6.19):]

The buddha-body of reality (chos-sku), the nature wherein expanse and pristine cognition are without duality is the essential nature, intellectually inestimable (dpag-med) and verbally inexpressible (brjod-du med). From its own disposition [the buddha-body of perfect] rapture (longs-spyod [sku]) is always spontaneously present as an inexhaustible (zad-med) treasure (gter) of precious (rin-chen) [or wish-fulfilling (yid-bzhin)] gemstones. From its disposition there are diffused for the sake of those to be trained an inconceivable (bsam-mi-khyab) billion-billion (bye-ba) emanational bodies (sprul-pa).

[The second concerns their presence in great self-manifesting spontaneity. It comments on Ch. 6.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.20]

Perfect in all the major and minor marks,

The maṇḍala present throughout the perceptual range

Perfectly displays the two great provisions as well. [20] ...

[Tibetan]

mtshan-dang dpe-byad thams-cad rdzogs /
spyod-yul kun-tu maṇḍala /
tshogs-chen gnyis-kyang rdzogs-par rol / [20]

Commentary:

[The second concerns their presence in great self-manifesting spontaneity. It comments on Ch. 6.20:]

The buddha-body of perfect rapture which appears in that way is indeed perfect in all the major and minor marks (mtshan-dang dpe-byad thams-cad rdzogs), and it appears as the maṇḍala (maṇḍala) of Buddha-body and pristine cognition, present throughout the perceptual range (spyod-yul kun-tu) of self-manifesting pristine cognition, where there is sameness with respect to the four times. As such, it is spontaneously present in a nature without good or ill, and it displays (rol), perfectly (rdzogs-par) and with great spontaneity in that self-manifesting nature, the two great provisions (tshogs-chen gnyis) as well (kyang)—namely, the provision of merit whereby all excellent attributes are self-manifest and the provision of pristine cognition whereby there is in no subjective apprehension at all.

[The second aspect is (the detailed exegesis) concerning the perfection of the levels (which comments on Ch. 6.21):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.21]

As the supreme level of skillful means and discriminative awareness
It is inconceivably supreme in such ways. [21] ...

[Tibetan]

thabs-dang shes-rab sa-yi mchog /
de-la-sogs-pa bsam-yas mchog / [21]

Commentary:

[The second aspect is (the detailed exegesis) concerning the perfection of the levels (which comments on Ch. 6.21):]

The level of the buddha-body of reality, the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables (yi-ge 'khor-lo tshogs-chen) is supreme among the levels (sa-yi mchog). In it there are present without duality the Universal Light, i.e. the level of skillful means (thabs) or the emanational body and (dang) Lotus Endowed. i.e. the level of discriminative awareness (shes-rab) or the self-

manifesting pure buddha-body of perfect rapture. in such ways (de la-sogs-pa) the enumeration of the levels and their enlightened attributes are immeasurable, inconceivably supreme (bsam-yas mchog) and entirely perfect.

Now, in this context, there are some ignorant of the essence of the levels who hold the level of Universal Light to refer to the buddha-body of reality, the Lotus Endowed to refer to the buddha-body of perfect rapture, and the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables to refer to the emanational body. But that is a misunderstanding of the profundity, which does not see that these are named merely after a hierarchical series of enlightened attributes. It is explained that Universal Light is so named because emanations are universally immeasurable; Lotus Endowed is so named because apparitions are immeasurable; and Great Cyclical Mass is so named because pristine cognition is immeasurable. The latter is also called the Great Cyclical Mass of Syllables because, in the uncreated expanse. it abides as the emanational basis, naturally present and unimpeded in the manner of seed-syllables. It is not that there is a cloud-mass of syllables but that the non-dual buddha-body of reality is present. There are others who have confused this term "cycle of syllables" with the cloud-mass of syllables, which is the nature of emanation.[1]

In connection with this argument, it is said in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

Transcending the level of Universal Light,
When one reaches the Lotus Endowed...

Is this not, one might ask, setting a hierarchical distinction with regard to the meaning of the levels? It has been explained however that they are identical in their true meaning, and simply named according to a hierarchical distinction of enlightened attributes and appearances which arise.[2]

[The third aspect is a synopsis of the spontaneous presence of the five Buddha-bodies (which comments on Ch. 6.22):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Here and in bis tshangs-dbyangs 'brug-sgra. p. 65, the author holds that the yi-ge 'khor-lo'i tshogs-chen-gyi sa does not refer to the actual emanation of the syllables, but to their causal basis, or dharmakāya. On these resultant levels, see also below, pp. 967-969.

[2]:

See below, pp. 675-676, 967-969, for a clearer explanation of this point.

Text 6.22 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.22]

The Buddha-body of the svāstika, without birth or death,
The one that abides in the field of all conflicting emotions.
The one that becomes an inexhaustible treasure,
The awareness-holding Buddha-body of indestructible reality.
The Buddha-body of sameness indivisible in all respects.
And the Buddha-body of pristine cognition which knows all things—
At this time all five Buddha-bodies are indeed perfect. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

skye-shi med-pa'i gYung-drung sku /
nyon-mongs kun-gyi zhing-du gnas /
zad mi-shes-pa'i gter-du 'gyur /
rdo-rje rig-pa 'dzin-pa'i sku /
thams-cad dbyer-med mnyam-pa'i sku /
thams-cad mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes-sku /
de-tshe sku-lnga kun-kyang rdzogs / [22]

Commentary:

[The third aspect is a synopsis of the spontaneous presence of the five Buddha-bodies (which comments on Ch. 6.22):]

When these levels have been obtained, the five Buddha-bodies are also spontaneously obtained. Thus there is first of all the buddha-body of reality free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. It is the unchanging absolute, the spontaneously present and perpetual buddha-body (sku) of the svāstika (gYung-drung),[1] the reality without birth or death (skye-shi med-pa'i).

From its disposition the blessing arises as the buddha-body of perfect rapture, and thence the emanational body naturally emerges. He is the one which abides (gnas) and performs acts of benefit in the field (zhing-du) of training, on behalf of all (kun-gyi) sentient beings endowed with conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs), satisfying each according to his or her needs. The buddha-body of perfect rapture itself, the basis from which the emanational body arises, is the one which becomes ('gyur) a treasure (gter-du) of all raptures of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, inexhaustible (zad mi-shes-pa'i) in its provisions of enlightened attributes. The nature in which these three buddha-bodies are without conjunction or disjunction is the buddha-body (sku) of unchanging Indestructible reality (rdo-rje). holding ('dzin-pa'i) the non-dual indestructible reality and the great pristine cognition of awareness (rig-pa). Lastly, there is the buddha-body of awakening which has two aspects. The former refers to the buddha-body (sku) of (-pa'i) awakening in sameness (mnyam). Indivisible (dbyer-med) in respect of all (thams-cad) things, in primordial Great Perfection, and to

the pristine cognition which qualitatively knows (the view); while the latter refers to the buddha-body (sku) of awakening and the pristine cognition (ye-shes) which quantitatively and distinctly knows (mkhyen-pa'i) all things (thams-cad).[2]

These are also the buddha-bodies associated with the five enlightened families and the five pristine cognitions: The body of the svāstika is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of the Tathāgata, and the pristine cognition of reality's expanse. The buddha-body of perfect rapture with its inexhaustible reality and the awareness-holding buddha-body of indestructible reality are the buddha-bodies associated with the enlightened family of indestructible reality and the mirror-like pristine cognition. The buddha-body of sameness where all things are indivisible is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of precious gems and the pristine cognition of sameness. The body of pristine cognition which knows all things is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of the lotus and the pristine cognition of discernment. And the emanational body or the one which abides in the field of all conflicting emotions is the buddha-body associated with the enlightened family of activity and the pristine cognition of 53 accomplishment.

At this time (de-tshe) when the levels are obtained, all five buddha-bodies are indeed (sku-lnga kun-kyang) perfectly (rdzogs) obtained.

This classification of resultant levels, buddha-bodies, and pristine cognitions has no temporal sequence. The levels are so named because they are the support for enlightened attributes; the buddha-bodies are so named because one is transformed into the body of the buddhas; the pristine cognitions are so called because they abide in naturally present awareness; and the enlightened activities are so called because they benefit living beings. Although these are differently named their essence is identical, just as something is called an object because it is created from causes and conditions, impermanent because it is perishable, and a "vase" because it pours water, while these names have one essential point of reference.

[The fourth part (of the interlinear commentary on the resultant maṇḍala) is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 6.23):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The svāstika is employed to symbolise the eternal or unchanging nature of the dharmakāya.

[2]:

On the rNying-ma interpretation of five or six Buddha-bodies, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 60a-63a.

Text 6.23 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.23]

So saying, the inexpressible maṇḍala in all the infinite limitless ten directions of the six world-systems became radiant in as many fields as there are atoms. [23] ...

[Tibetan]

—zhes-brjod-pas / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas mu-med-pa thams-cad-du dkyil-'khor brjod-kyis mi-lang-ba / zhing-gi rdul-snyed-du gsal-bar gyur-to / [23]

Commentary:

[The fourth part (of the interlinear commentary on the resultant maṇḍala) is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 6.23):]

So saying (zhes brjod-pas) these verses, the inconceivable, inexpressible (brjod-kyis mi-lang-ba) maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor), emanating in all the Infinite limitless (mtha'-yas mu-med-pa thams-cad-du) fields in each of the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu) inhabited by those to be trained became radiant (gsal-bar gyur-to) and appeared in (du) the fields (zhing-gi) of all the buddhas of the ten directions, which are equal in number to all the atoms (rdul), as many as there are (snyed).

[Synopsis of the Unique Mandala of Resultant Great Pristine Cognition (257.2-261.1)]

The third part (of the exegesis of the meaning of the words of this chapter—see p. 638) is a synopsis of the unique maṇḍala of resultant great pristine cognition. It comprises both the manner in which it is enunciated and the essence (of the verses) which are enunciated.

[The former (comments on Ch. 6.24):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.24]

Then this secret description of these very maṇḍalas wherein the

Tathāgatas and the assembled host of their queens are without duality emerged from the indestructible reality of Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. [24] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang gnyis-su med-pa'i
dkyil-'khor de-dag-nyid-kyi gsang-ba 'di-nyid sku-gsung-thugs yon-tan
'phrin-las rdo-rje-las phyung-ngo / [24]

Commentary:

[The former (comments on Ch. 6.24):]

Once all things had become radiant as the maṇḍala. then (de-nas) this secret description (gsane-ba 'di-nyid) of the very (nyid-kyi) Tathāgata, emanating from these maṇḍalas wherein (dkyil-'khor de-dag) the self-manifesting Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) and the assembled host of their queens (btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang) are naturally without duality (gnyis-su med-pa'i) emerged (phyung-ngo) as follows from the indestructible reality of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities (sku-gsung-thugs yon-tan phrin-las rdo-rje-las).

[The latter (comments on Ch. 6.25):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 6.25-26]

Aho!

Without reference in terms of the object of reference

And the subject of reference, inestimable and inconceivable.

The maṇḍalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness

Are diverse and inexpressible.

Without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy

Throughout sameness and variety.

The expanse is pervaded.

The maṇḍalas, primordially and universally radiant,

Are emanated but not conceptually elaborated.

Ho!

—Such were the secret words of indestructible reality which emerged.

[25] This completes the sixth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled Emanation of the Maṇḍala. [26] ...

[Tibetan]

a-ho /

dmigs-bya dmigs-byed mi-dmigs dpag-med bsam-mi-khyab /
ye-shes rang-rig dkyil-'khor sna-tshogs brjod-mi-lang /
mnyam-dang mi-mnyam kun-khyab khyab-med khyab-pa'i dbyings /
ye-nas kun-gsal dkyil-'khor rnam-'phro spros-pa-med /
ho /
—zhes rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o / [25] gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-
na-nyid nges-pa-las dkyil-'khor spros-pa'i le'u-ste drug-pa'o / [26]

Commentary:

[The latter (comments on Ch. 6.25):]

Aho! (A-ho) is exclaimed because the wondrous display of the self-manifesting maṇḍala of contemplation is revealed without straying from the expanse. The object of reference (dmigs-bya) is the naturally pure phenomena, and the subject of reference (dmigs-byed) is the intelligence purified of suddenly arisen imagination. That which is without reference in terms of (mi-dmigs) them is simply non-dual pristine cognition, the essence of these two. It is the ultimate nature, inestimable (dpag-med) by the intellect, the inconceivable (bsam mi-khyab) maṇḍala of the natural ground.

The maṇḍalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness (ye-shes rang-rig dkyil-'khor) in which, preceded by the three modes of contemplation, one meditates on the nature of visually created deities in the manner of the moon's reflection in water, are diverse (sna-tshogs) in form and inexpressible (brjod mi-lang). After this meditation, one becomes equipoised in the expanse (dbyings) or the real, without apprehending it as merely the creation and perfection stages. This is the reality pervaded (khyab-pa'i) by the Great Perfection, the originally pure reality or nature without (med) the pervasive subject-object dichotomy (khyab-khyab). It is present throughout (kun) the sameness (mnyam) where saṃsāra's nature abides in reality and (dang) the variety (mi-mnyam) of nirvāṇa's (apparitions) which are quiescent of reference. Such is the maṇḍala of the path in which the creation and perfection stages are attained.

Finally, after this experiential cultivation when the result directly reaches the ground, the maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the a diversified emanational body emerge from the maṇḍala of the unimpeded Buddha-body of perfect rapture which primordially (ye-nas) appears and is universally radiant (kun-gsal). They are emanated (mam-'phro) so that the two kinds of benefit are spontaneously performed for the sake of living beings. But whether these two Buddha-bodies are emanated or not, the buddha-body of reality abides in a nature which is not conceptually elaborated (spros-pa med) from the moment of its ostensible appearance. Ho! (ho) is exclaimed because the sky-like reality is wondrously revealed.

Such were (zhes) the secret words of indestructible reality (rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o) which emerged.

This same synopsis also refers to the ground, path and result individually. (With respect to the ground: Mind-as-such, primordially without reference in terms of the dualistic nature of the object of reference and the subject of reference or intellect is inestimable and inconceivable. in its disposition of inner radiance the maṇḍalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness primordially abide. diverse and inexpressible. Indeed, their natural sameness, pervasive throughout the sameness of reality and the variety of apparitional reality, is an expanse that is greatly pervasive, without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy. The maṇḍalas, primordially and universally radiant, are emanated in great spontaneity for the sake of all living beings. But they are not conceptually elaborated. Ho! is exclaimed on account of this wondrous nature.

Now, this real nature is the all-pervasive essence, as is said in the Buddhasamāyoga Tantra (T. 366-367):

All the infinite objects
Of the spacious expanse
Are the sameness and variety of reality's expanse.
Glorious in the expanse of total space,
Vajrasattva is ever present.

With respect to the path: The essence that is without reference in terms of both the object of reference or contemplation and the subject of

reference or one's own intelligence comprises the contemplation of the real nature, the contemplation of universal appearances, which is inestimable in compassion, and the contemplation of the causal basis, from whose compassionate disposition. Inconceivable mind-as-such emerges. Therefrom are derived the maṇḍalas of pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness which are diverse and inexpressible. Having meditated in this

way, all things become emptiness because they are the same in mind-as-such, they become appearance or variety which is differently and visually created, and they become the expanse which is pervasive, without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy, throughout its uncreated essence. From that disposition, primordially and universally radiant, many maṇḍalas are emanated through the process of emanation & absorption, but they are actually known in a disposition that is not conceptually elaborated.

It is said in the Hidden Seminal Point of the Moon (T. 447):

The actuality of all spiritual warriors
Is Vajrasattva, bliss supreme.
The aspects of this actuality
Are present in all ways and in all things.

Then, when (this synopsis) is explained according to the result: Reality is without reference in terms of the object of reference and the subject of reference, inestimable and Inconceivable. From its disposition, the maṇḍalas of self-manifesting pristine cognition or intrinsic awareness are diverse, inexpressible and radiant. Their essence is the expanse without the pervasive subject-object dichotomy. the reality pervasive throughout the sameness and variety of their array. From that buddha-body of perfect rapture, primordially and universally radiant, the maṇḍalas of the emanational body are emanated, but they are not conceptually elaborated from the expanse itself, and they do not change, in the manner of the moon when reflected in water. Thus, the reality in which the three Buddha-bodies are without conjunction or disjunction is wondrously revealed. Here, there is a sameness with respect to the buddhas who appear as such and sentient beings, who are also actually uncreated.

It says in the Sūtra of the Arrayed Bouquet (Gaṇḍavyūha, T. 44):[1]

Those who well abide in natural sameness
With respect to self and Buddhas.
And are dynamic and non-acquisitive
Become the Tathāgatas.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the sixth chapter (le'u ste drug-pa) from (las) the secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of contemplation Definitive with respect to the (nges-pa) self-manifesting Real (de-kho-na-nyid), entitled Emanation of the Mandala (spros-pa'i dkyil-'khor) of natural contemplation.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. above p. 392, note 73. The present passage reads de-bzhin gshegs-pa.

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Then these (mantras) emerged from the indestructible body, speech, and mind of all the Tathāgatas along with the assembled host of their queens. [1]

BHRUṂ VIŚVAVIŚUDDHE [2]

HŪṂ VAJRADHṚK

OM̐ JINAJIK

SVĀ RATNADHṚK

ĀṂ ĀROLIK

HĀ PRAJÑĀDHṚK

MŪṂ DHĀTVIŚVARĪ

LĀṂ DVEṢARATI
 MĀṂ MOHARATI
 PĀṂ RĀGARATI
 TĀṂ VAJRARATI [3]
 KṢĪṂ HĪ RĀJĀYA
 TRĀṂ Ā GARBHAYAḤ
 HRĪḤ HA HŪṂ PADMĀBHATAMAḤ
 JĪṂ KURUPĀṆA HRĪḤ
 HŪṂ LĀSYE SAMAYAS TVAM
 TRĀṂ MĀLYE SAMAYA HOḤ
 HRĪḤ GĪTĪ RĀGO/HAM
 ĀḤ NṚTĪ RĀGAYĀMI [4]
 MAI DHARAṆĪ SVĀHĀ
 THLĪṂ NISĀRAMBHĀYA SVĀHĀ
 HŪṂ SARĀJĀYA SVĀHĀ
 MŪṂ ŚRĪ ĀṂ RĀGĀYA SVĀHĀ
 JAḤ DHŪPE PRAVEŚĀ
 HŪṂ PUṢPE ĀVEŚĀ
 VAM DĪPASUKHINĪ
 HOḤ GANDHE CITTA HOḤ [5]
 HŪṂ YAMĀNTAKṚT PHAT
 HŪṂ VIGHNĀNTAKṚT PHAT
 HŪṂ PADMĀNTAKṚT PHAT
 HŪṂ PRAJÑĀNTAKṚT PHAT
 OM MAHĀVAJRADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪṂ PHAT
 OM MAHĀRATNADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪṂ PHAT
 OM MAHĀPADMADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪṂ PHAT
 OM MAHĀKARMADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪṂ PHAT
 [6]
 HŪṂ HŪṂ HŪṂ VAJRA CITTA OM
 A A A VAJRĪ BHADRASAMANTĀ AḤ [7]
 OM MUNE KRĪṂ SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE HŪṂ TRUṂ SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE SRUṂ SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE PRAM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE KṢAM SVĀHĀ
 OM MUNE YE SVĀHĀ [8]
 OM EHYEHI BHAGAVĀN MAHĀKARUṆIKA DṚŚYA HOḤ SAMAYAS
 TVAM
 JAḤ HŪṂ VAM HOḤ [9]
 OM ĀḤ HŪṂ SVĀHĀ
 VĀ VĀ VĀ VĀ VĀ
 JRA JRA JRA JRA JRA
 SA SA SA SA SA
 MA MA MA MA MA
 YA YA YA YA YA
 OM ĀḤ HŪṂ SVĀHĀ [10]

OM King of pristine cognition,
 Equipoised now in the most wondrous Buddha-body.
 Speech, mind, attributes and activities.
 May I unite with the Great Seal!
 OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪṂ OM VAJRA SAMAYAS TVAM

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOH JAH HÜM VAM HOH [11]

With these mantras. the maṇḍalas of buddha-speech resounded pervasively in all the ten directions of the six world-systems. They further resounded and they absolutely resounded. [12]

Then the Transcendent Lord vanished into that maṇḍala where the indestructible active male subject and the indestructible female passive object are non-dual.

Then the Great Identity of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times brought forth from the Magical Net, the indestructible reality of Buddha-body, speech and mind, these (mantras) which are said to absorb the pristine cognition and charisma of their Great Identity. [13]

OM MAHĀŚŪNYATĀJNĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM MAHĀDARŚAJNĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM MAHĀPRATYAVEKṢANAJNĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM MAHĀSAMATĀJNĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM MAHĀKRṬYUPASTHĀNAJNĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
[14]
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKĀYA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/
HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀVĀG VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀCITTA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/
HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀNURĀGAṆA
VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHAPŪJĀ VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
[15]

At these mantras, (the blessings) dissolved, radiated, and blazed forth. [16]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvelous reality—
The Buddha-speech of all perfect Buddhas.
Transcends all sounds, names and words,
But clearly emerges as diverse sounds. [17]

The aspects of the maṇḍala of unique Buddha-speech
Are inconceivable and all-pervasive.
Perceived in distinct sounds, names and words.
All these are the supreme seal of buddha-speech. [18]

From the Magical Net, supreme among tantras.
Emerge the meanings of Buddha-speech, endowed with bliss.
And yet all these are lotus-like in their disposition.
Thus, the path of liberation or release
And the sounds of saṃsāra, as many as are expressed.
Are the supreme Buddha-speech.
All higher and lower vehicles, and the languages
Of all erroneous destinies, without exception.
Are subsumed in Buddha-speech.

The indestructible reality of enlightenment. [19]

This subsumption is perceived in the ten directions.
Sound itself is enunciated in its unborn disposition.
But when spoken it is the inexpressible;
And this same inexpressible nature
Comprises the diverse sounds.
Perceptible to all but differently appraised.
Real meaning is differently interpreted.
In the case of a single word.
As for example the phrase "removal of numbness" [or "sneeze"].
This is the king, the supreme Buddha-speech. [20]

Although there are unthinkable higher and lower vehicles.
They are not spoken in isolation from the real nature.
Although they are heard differently as skillful means
For the sake of those to be trained.
And all pronouncements are expressed accordingly.
They are unspoken, according to the real nature. [21]

The unwritten and the buddha-speech of awareness
Do not emerge on the tip of the Buddha-tongue.
Yet, by the blessing of the Buddha-speech of spirituality.
Diverse meanings are distinctly clarified
For the sake of living beings. [22]

Those that are clarified are themselves
The supreme indestructible Buddha-speech.
The real nature is such that the meanings of Buddha-speech
For the sake of living beings
Do not stray from the disposition of the real.
Just as, for example, the sound of an echo. [23]

This completes the seventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive
With Respect To The Real, entitled The Absorption of the Mandala and the
Secret Mantras. [24]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.1]

Then these (mantras) emerged from the indestructible body, speech,
and mind of all the Tathāgatas along with the assembled host of their
queens. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang bcas-pa thams-cad-
kyi sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las 'di-dag phyung ngo / [1]

Commentary:

[(261.1-276.5)]

The detailed exegesis of the branches of the second section (i.e. the emanation of maṇḍala of contemplation—see p. 626) concerns the maṇḍala of the mantras of buddha-speech and the maṇḍala of the seals (or hand-emblems) of buddha-body. The former (is the subject-matter of this chapter).

It has three parts: a description of the causal basis for the emergence of the maṇḍala of buddha-speech; a teaching on the actual maṇḍala of secret mantras; and the establishing of its nature.

[The first (261.3-261.4, comments on Ch. 7.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of contemplation had been revealed, then (de-nas) in order that its ancillary maṇḍala of mantras might be revealed, these ('di-dag) following secret mantras emerged (phyung-ngo) from the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas along with the assembled host of their queens (de-bzhin gshegs-pa btsun-mo'i tshogs-dang bcas-pa thams-cad-kyi sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las).

[The Actual Mandala of the Secret Mantras (261.4-270.5)]

The second part includes both the mantras which visually create the maṇḍala and the mantras which confer empowerment.

[Mantras which Visually Create the Maṇḍala (261.4-268.1):]

These are fourfold, namely, the mantra which visually creates the supporting celestial palace; the mantras which visually create the supported deities; the mantras which completely perfect enlightened activity; and the appearance of their wondrous omens.

[i. The first of these (comments on Ch. 7.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.2]

BHRUṂ VIŚVAVĪŚUDDHE [2] ...

Commentary:

[i. The first of these (comments on Ch. 7.2):]

Concerning the recitation of BHRUM VIŚVA VIŚUDDHE, BHRUM conveys the meanings of Vairocana. a vase, a celestial palace. and a wheel, as well as being the seed-syllable of Uṣṇīṣacakravartin. Among these, in this context, it visually creates the celestial palace on the circle of pristine cognition, which is the immeasurable ground. It is because the celestial palace is the essence of Vairocana and because a vase is also shaped like a celestial palace that these (other meanings) are associated with the syllable BHRUM. This mantra is Indeed indicative of the previous Buddha Uṣṇīṣacakravartin because he was the one who formed an aspiration connected with the celestial palace for the sake of buddhas and sentient beings.

It is said in the Short Commentary (P. 4755):

It is the mantra of Uṣṇīṣacakravartin's own aspiration.

And in the Sequence of Light (P. 4731):

The diverse maṇḍalas are emanated in BHRUM,
As the full-grown palace of pristine cognition.

This syllable is also said to refer outwardly to the palace of the deities, inwardly to the seed-syllables of the deities, and secretly to the womb of the female consorts.

As is said in the Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (ngb. vol. 15):

BHRUM gathers diversity in the expanse or womb.
Pure in its activity and essence
Is this jewelled receptacle of the Buddhas.

VIŚVA means diversity, and VIŚUDDHE indicates the natural purity of all that appears as the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. The expanse of reality free from conceptual elaboration, which is revealed itself to be the residence of the buddhas is in this context illustratively referred to as the celestial palace.

[ii. Secondly, there are six categories of the mantras which visually create the deities, among which the first includes the mantras of the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7.3):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.3]

HŪṂ VAJRADHṚK
OM JINAJIK
SVĀ RATNADHṚK
ĀṂ ĀROLIK
HĀ PRAJÑĀDHṚK
MŪṂ DHĀTVĪŚVARĪ
LĀṂ DVEṢARATI
MĀṂ MOHARATI
PĀṂ RĀGARATI
TĀṂ VAJRARATI [3] ...

Commentary:

[ii. Secondly, there are six categories of the mantras which visually create the deities, among which the first includes the mantras of the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7.3):]

These are in two groups of five beginning with HŪṂ VAJRADHṚK. Now, the initial syllables of the mantras of the male consorts are respectively HŪṂ, OM, SVĀ, ĀṂ, and HĀ. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras of unerring basis.

These are then naturally expressed as the five Buddha-bodies, the five pristine cognitions and so forth.

It says in the Guhyasamāja Tantra (T. 442-3):

They are respectively named
The holder of indestructible reality.
The conqueror of conquerors.
The holder of gemstones,
The indicator of great desire,

And the holder of discriminative awareness.

And, for example, in the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

To illustrate the Buddha-body
The syllable OM is assigned.

VAJRADHṚK and so forth are the essential mantras which illustrate the nature of these (male consorts). The first (VAJRADHṚK) is that of Akṣobhya, VAJRA indicating the indestructible reality where appearance and emptiness are without duality, and DHṚK indicating that he is the holder of that reality. JINAJIK is similar (in its interpretation—i.e. Vairocana and Akṣobhya are interchangeable).[1] RATNADHṚK is the mantra of Ratnasambhava. RATNA meaning precious gemstone and DHṚK meaning that he is the holder of it because he grants all that is desired to living beings. ĀROLIK is the mantra of Amitābha, indicating that he is attracted towards those who are to be trained; and PRAJÑĀDHṚK is the mantra of Amoghasiddhi, indicating that he holds diverse modes of discriminative awareness for the sake of those to be trained.

The initial syllables of the mantras of their female consorts are respectively MŪṢ, LĀṢ, MĀṢ, PĀṢ, (or PHYĀṢ), and TĀṢ. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras of unerring basis. Their essence is naturally expressed as follows: MŪṢ DHĀTVĪSVARĪ is the mantra of the naturally pure Dhātvīśvarī. LĀṢ DVEṢARATI is the mantra of Buddhalocanā who is the female councillor of all the Buddhas. MĀṢ MOHARATI is the mantra of Māmakī, indicating that she is the mistress of sentient beings. PĀṢ RĀGARATI is the mantra of Pāṇḍaravāsini, indicating that she is uncovered by defective blemishes; and TĀṢ VAJRARATI is the mantra of Tārā, indicating that she liberates sentient beings from saṃsāra.

[The second category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-mind. (It comments on Ch. 7.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This, of course, is not the view of bka'-ma commentators, such as Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, p. 205, who assert Vajradhṛk to be the mantra of Akṣobhya and Jinajik to be that of Vairocana.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.4]

KṢIṢ HI RĀJĀYA
TRĀṢ Ā GARBHAYAḤ
HRĪḤ HA HŪṢ PADMĀBHATAMAḤ
JIṢ KURUPĀṆA HRĪḤ
HŪṢ LĀSYE SAMAYAS TVAM
TRĀṢ MĀLYE SAMAYA HOḤ
HRĪḤ GĪTI RĀGO/HAM
ĀḤ NṚTI RĀGAYĀMI [4] ...

Commentary:

[The second category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-mind. (It comments on Ch. 7.4):]

These also comprise two groups (i.e. male and female): The four (initial syllables) of the male spiritual warriors are respectively KṢIṢ, TRĀṢ, HRĪḤ, and JIṢ. These are their creative seed-syllables or root-mantras.

HI RĀJĀYA (is the mantra of Kṣitigarbha), the king who acts on behalf of sentient beings in the manner of the earth or of eyes.[1]

Ā GARBHAYAḤ is (the mantra of Ākāśagarbha), the nucleus from which all desired necessities emerge. HA HŪM PADMĀBHATAMAḤ is (the mantra of Avalokiteśvara) who has a lotus-like face because he is without attachment and captivates the minds of those to be trained; and KURUPĀṆA HRĪḤ is (the mantra of Vajrapāṇi) who acts on behalf of sentient beings in an indestructible manner (i.e. wielding a vajra).

The initial syllables of their four female spiritual warriors are respectively HŪM, TRĀM, HRĪḤ, and ĀḤ. These are their root-mantras and seed-syllables. LĀSYE SAMAYASTVĀM is (the mantra of Lāsyā) meaning she who lets the commitments of all buddhas be assumed because she is endowed with a playful or erotic air. MĀLYE SAMAYA HOḤ is (the mantra of Mālyā), meaning she who must keep the commitments of all the Buddhas through retention and contemplation. GĪTI RĀGO/HAM is (the mantra of Gītā), meaning I am the one like a sweet melody who is attracted to sentient beings; and NṚTI RĀGAYĀMI is (the mantra of Nartī), meaning I must be devoted to sentient beings through enlightened activity which resembles the movements of a dance.

[The third category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-speech. (It comments on Ch. 7.5):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

According to Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che's oral exegesis, these are metaphors respectively for utility and care.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.5]

MAI DHARAṆĪ SVĀHĀ
THLĪM NISĀRAMBHĀYA SVĀHĀ
HŪM SARAJĀYA SVĀHĀ
MŪM ŚRĪ ĀM RĀGĀYA SVĀHĀ
JAḤ DHŪPE PRAVEŚĀ
HŪM PUṢPE ĀVEŚĀ
VAḤ DĪPASUKHINĪ
HOḤ GANDHE CITTA HOḤ [5] ...

Commentary:

[The third category includes the mantras of the male and female spiritual warriors of buddha-speech. (It comments on Ch. 7.5):]

These also comprise two groups, among which the root mantras or seed-syllables of the four male spiritual warriors are respectively MAI, THLĪM, HŪM, and MŪM. DHARANĪ is (the mantra of Maitreya) who supports sentient beings with loving kindness. SVĀHĀ means "establish the ground". NISĀRAMBHAYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin) who dispels obscurations which are dense or hard to purify. SARĀJAYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Samantabhadra), the all-positive king whose nature does not abide in the duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; and ŚRĪ ĀM RĀGĀYA SVĀHĀ is (the mantra of Mañjuśrī), the glorious one who is devoted to sentient beings without abiding in duality.

The root mantras or seed-syllables of their four female spiritual warriors are respectively JAḤ, HŪṂ, VAṂ, and HOḤ. DHŪPE PRAVEŚĀ is (the mantra of Dhūpā), the fragrance of moral discipline which penetrates the mental continuum of those to be trained. PUṢPE ĀVEŚĀ is (the mantra of Puṣpā), the extensive cascade of the flowers of enlightenment into the mental continuum of those to be trained. DĪPA SUKHINĪ is (the mantra of Ālokā) who dispels the darkness of ignorance by the lamp of pristine cognition; and GANDHE CITTA HOḤ is (the mantra of Gandhā) who satisfies the mental continuum of those to be trained by her stream of nectar.

[The fourth category includes the mantras of the male and female gatekeepers (commenting on Ch. 7.6):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.6]

HŪM YAMĀNTAKṚT PHAṬ

HŪM VIGHNĀNTAKṚT PHAṬ

HŪM PADMĀNTAKṚT PHAṬ

HŪM PRAJÑĀNTAKṚT PHAṬ

OM MAHĀVAJRADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ

OM MAHĀRATNADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ

OM MAHĀPADMADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ

OM MAHĀKARMADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ

[6] ...

Commentary:

[The fourth category includes the mantras of the male and female gatekeepers (commenting on Ch. 7.6):]

These are also in two groups, among which the seed-syllables of the four male gatekeepers are respectively HŪM, HŪṂ, HŪṂ, and HŪM. Through the sound of these syllables there comes about a or gathering

whereby venomous beings are overpowered, or the enlightened attributes of greatness are established in the mental continuum of those to be trained. Also, by the sound of their final syllable PHAṬ, there comes about an aspharaṇa or dispersal or diffusion, in which the venomous forces are dispersed. YAMĀNTAKṚT (is the mantra of Yamāntaka) who assumes the form of Yama, lord of death. VIGHNĀNTAKṚT (is the mantra of Mahābala) who puts an end to impediments. PADMĀNTAKṚT (is the mantra of Hayagrīva) who is uncovered by the mire of saṃsāra: and PRAJÑĀNTAKṚT (is the mantra of Amṛtakunḍalin) who subjugates the demon of conflicting emotions.

The female gatekeepers similarly have OM̐ as their initial syllable and PHAṬ as their final syllable in the above manner. MAHĀVAJRADHARO MAHĀKRODHĪSVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪṢ (is the mantra of Aṅkuśā), the great retainer of indestructible reality, the great wrathful mistress who blazes forth. Similarly, the same mantra combined with RATNA is (that of Pāśā), the wrathful mistress who is (a retainer of) gemstones. in combination with PADMA it is (the mantra of Sphoṭā), the wrathful mistress (who is the retainer) of the lotus, or padma in the original Sanskrit; and in combination with KARMA, it is the mantra (of Gaṇṭhā), the wrathful mistress of enlightened activity.

[The fifth category includes the mantras of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra. (It comments on Ch. 7.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.7]

HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ VAJRA CITTA OM̐
A A A VAJRĪ BHADRASAMANTĀ AḤ [7] ...

Commentary:

[The fifth category includes the mantras of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra. (It comments on Ch. 7.7):]

Of these, the mantra of the male consort has three initial syllables HŪṢ, HŪṢ, HŪṢ, indicating the three pristine cognitions or purities in the mental continuum of the three world-systems. VAJRA CITTA OM̐ is (the mantra of Samantabhadra), the Buddha-mind of all the Buddhas who is endowed with the nature of indestructible reality. The mantra of the female consort has the three initial syllables A, A, A, Indicating that the three media of body, speech and mind, the three times, and the three expanses respectively are uncreated. VAJRĪ BHADRASAMANTA AḤ is (the mantra of Samantabhadri), indicating that this reality is pure in the nature of Samantabhadri.

[The sixth category includes the mantras of the six sages. (It comments on Ch. 7.8):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.8]

OM MUNE KRIM SVĀHĀ
OM MUNE HŪM TRUM SVĀHĀ
OM MUNE SRUM SVĀHĀ
OM MUNE PRAM SVĀHĀ
OM MUNE KṢAM SVĀHĀ
OM MUNE YE SVĀHĀ [8] ...

Commentary:

[The sixth category includes the mantras of the six sages. (It comments on Ch. 7.8):]

OM is the accumulated blessing of mantra, the nature of the five pristine cognitions. MUNE means the sage (i.e. one who has capability), while KRIM indicates those spiritual beings such as ogres who are not peaceful in their demeanour, and in this context, the antigods. SVĀHĀ means "establish the ground". These syllables are similarly combined in the following manner: TRUM is the nucleus of human beings who are bound by craving. SRUM is that of the animals of dull intelligence. PRAM is that of the tormented spirits afflicted by hunger and thirst. KṢAM is the nucleus of the gods who have patience; and YE is the nucleus of the denizens of hell who fall downwards.

[iii. Thirdly, (see p. 689) there are the mantras which completely perfect enlightened activity. The first group of these comprise the mantras of invitation and absorption, (commenting on Ch. 7.9):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.9]

OM EHYEHI BHAGAVĀN MAHĀKARUṆIKA DṚŚYA HOḤ SAMAYAS
TVAM

JAḤ HŪṢ VAṢ HOḤ [9] ...

Commentary:

[iii. Thirdly, (see p. 689) there are the mantras which completely perfect enlightened activity. The first group of these comprise the mantras of invitation and absorption, (commenting on Ch. 7.9):]

OM EHYEHI BHAGAVĀN MAHĀKARUNIKA DRŚYA HOḤ SAMAYASTVAṢ means Come here! Transcendent Lord endowed with great spirituality. Look with compassion! Assume the commitments!" JAḤ HŪṢ VAṢ HOḤ are the mantras which respectively summon with the iron hook (of Aṅkuśā), bind with the lasso (of Pāśā), tie with the iron chain (of Sphoṭā) and overpower with the bell (of Gaṇṭhā).

[The second group (commenting on Ch. 7.10) comprises the mantras which scatter the (offering) flowers of one's own awareness:]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.10]

OM ĀḤ HŪṢ SVĀHĀ
VĀ VĀ VĀ VĀ VĀ
JRA JRA JRA JRA JRA
SA SA SA SA SA
MA MA MA MA MA
YA YA YA YA YA
OM ĀḤ HŪṢ SVĀHĀ [10] ...

Commentary:

[The second group (commenting on Ch. 7.10) comprises the mantras which scatter the (offering) flowers of one's own awareness:]

OM, ĀḤ, HŪṢ, and SVĀHĀ are the syllables which indicate the five enlightened families and the five pristine cognitions. Then, there are the syllables VĀ JRA SA MA YA which vibrate separately and have become dispersed. These should be combined with the five syllables which precede them and the five which follow them in this way: OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM Indicates that Buddha-body is attained through the commitments of buddha-body. ĀḤ VAJRA SAMAYA ĀḤ indicates that buddha-speech is attained through the commitments of buddha-speech. HŪṢ VAJRA SAMAYA HŪṢ indicates that buddha-mind is attained through the commitments of buddha-mind. SVĀ VAJRA SAMAYA SVM Indicates that enlightened attributes are attained through the commitments of enlightened attributes; and HĀ VAJRA SAMAYA HĀ indicates that

enlightened activity is attained through the commitments of enlightened activity.

[The third group includes a prayer for accomplishment (commenting on Ch. 7.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.11]

OM King of pristine cognition,
Equipoised now in the most wondrous Buddha-body.
Speech, mind, attributes and activities.
May I unite with the Great Seal!
OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM OM VAJRA SAMAYAS TVAM
OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOḤ JAḤ HŪM VAM HOḤ [11] ...

Commentary:

[The third group includes a prayer for accomplishment (commenting on Ch. 7.11):]

The expression OM King of pristine cognition (OM ye-shes rgyal-po) is an appeal to the Transcendent Lord. He is equipoised now in (da-nyid-du mnyam-sbyor-bas) the accomplishment of most wondrous (rmad-po-che) Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities (sku-gsung-thugs yontan 'phrin-las) of all the tathāgatas. Thus, may I unite (bdag sbyor-cig) at the present time with the Great Seal (phyag-rgya chen-po) of the deities' body, speech and mind. OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM timely summons the commitments of Buddha-body. OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM summons the commitments of Buddha-speech; and OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOḤ summons the commitments of Buddha-mind. JAḤ HŪM VAM HOḤ bring about fusion and stability in the non-dual nature.

[iv. Fourthly (see p. 689), there is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 7.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.12]

With these mantras, the maṇḍalas of buddha-speech resounded pervasively in all the ten directions of the six world-systems. They further resounded and they absolutely resounded. [12]

[Tibetan]

—zhes-brjod-pas / gsung-gi dkyil-'khor 'di-dag-gis / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-du khyab-par grags-so / rab-tu grags-so / kun-tu grags-so / [12]

Commentary:

[iv. Fourthly (see p. 689), there is the appearance of wondrous omens (which comments on Ch. 7.12):]

With these (zhes brjod-pas) words, the maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor de-dag-gis) of the secret mantras of Buddha-speech (gsung-gi) resounded pervasively (khyab-par grags-so) with the great sound of mantra in all the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-du). They further resounded (rab-tu grags-so) by conferring maturation on all the minds of sentient beings; and they absolutely resounded (kun-tu grags-so) by conferring liberation on them. One should know that these (three stages) also refer respectively to the sounds of the secret mantras of buddha-body, speech and mind, to the rays which are emitted from them, and to their grand apparition which is totally diffused.

[Mantras Which Confer Empowerment (268.1-270.5):]

[The mantras which confer empowerment have two sections. The first concerning the manner of their enunciation (comments on Ch. 7.13):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.13]

Then the Transcendent Lord vanished into that maṇḍala where the indestructible active male subject and the indestructible female passive object are non-dual.

Then the Great Identity of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times brought forth from the Magical Net, the indestructible reality of Buddha-body, speech and mind, these (mantras) which are said to absorb the pristine cognition and charisma of their Great Identity. [13] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das byed-pa-po rdo-rje-dang / bya-ba-mo rdo-rje

gnyis-su med-pa'i dkyil-'khor-la thim-par mdzad-do /

de-nas phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi bdag-nyid chen-pos bdag-nyid chen-po'i ye-shes-dang byin-bsdu-ba zhes-bya-ba 'di sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje sgyu-'phrul dra-ba-las phyung-ngo / [13]

Commentary:

[The mantras which confer empowerment have two sections. The first concerning the manner of their enunciation (comments on Ch. 7.13):]

Once the mantras which visually create (the deities) had been revealed, then (de-nas) the Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan-'das) vanished into that maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-la thim-par mdzad-do) of Buddha-speech where Samantabhadra, the indestructible (rdo-rje) active male subject (byed-pa-po) or intelligence and (dang) Samantabhadri, the indestructible (rdo-rje) passive female object (bya-ba-mo) or phenomena are non-dual (gnyis-su med-pa'i). And once he had vanished, then (de-nas) Samantabhadra, the Great Identity of (bdag-nyid chen-pos) all the Tathāgatas of the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-thams-cad-kyi) brought forth (phung-ngo) these ('di) following secret mantras which are said to absorb (bsdu-ba zhes-bya-ba) all the excellent pristine cognition (ye-shes) and (dang) charisma (byin) of their great (chen-po'i) accomplishment, i.e. the identity (bdag-nyid) of the body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas. This emerged, naturally arisen through blessing, from the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba-las), the nature of indestructible reality (rdo-rje) where the buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs) of the male & female teachers are non-dual; and where skillful means and discriminative awareness are coalesced.

The latter refers to the actual mantras which confer empowerment. These are in three parts:

[i. The first confers empowerment through the five pristine cognitions, washing away stains. (It comments on Ch. 7.14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.14]

OM MAHĀŚŪNYATĀJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAṀ
OM MAHĀDARŚAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAṀ
OM MAHĀPRATYAVEKŚANAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAṀ
OM MAHĀSAMATĀJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAṀ
OM MAHĀKRṬYUPASTHĀNAJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAṀ
[14]...

Commentary:

[i. The first confers empowerment through the five pristine cognitions, washing away stains. (It comments on Ch. 7.14):]

OM MAHĀŚŪNYATĀJÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM means "I am the identity which is the essential nature of indestructible reality, the great pristine cognition of emptiness".[1] And when (the words of this mantra) are similarly combined (with the other pristine cognitions. ĀDARSA indicates the mirror-like pristine cognition. PRATYAVEKṢANA indicates the pristine cognition of discernment, SAMATĀ indicates the pristine cognition of sameness, and KṚTYUPASTHĀNA indicates the pristine cognition of assiduous accomplishment. JÑĀNA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM means "I am the Identity which is the essential nature of the indestructible reality or pristine cognition". The significance of this empowerment is that, at this juncture, (the deities) are alternately crowned (by) the lords of their respective enlightened families, a full finger-span in size.

The Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) accordingly says:

The active Akṣobhya and his female consort
Are depicted with the seal (or gesture)
Of (the enlightened family)
Of the holder of indestructible reality
As are Maitreya and Kṣitigarbha.
The others have their own seals.
Yamāntaka is explained to be the permanence (of this family).
And the great sage (Śatakratu)
Who is a holder of indestructible reality,
Is most glorious because he is peerless.

In this context, you may ask. should Vairocana not be the central deity by whom (the deities) are crowned? Akṣobhya who symbolises the buddha-mind of the Tathāgata family is however correct. This is because, in relation to Akṣobhya, in this context (of the Tathāgata family), Vairocana symbolises the buddha-body. Here all the deities are crowned by the five Tathāgatas.[2]

[ii. Secondly, there are the mantras through which power is introduced, and blessing conferred by the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7.15):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e., a synonym for dharmadhātujñāna.

[2]:

This appears to contradict the statement made above, p. 390, that Vairocana is the buddha-mind of the tathāgata family and Akṣobhya the buddha-mind of the vajra-family. A more logical reading would therefore be: rdo-rje'i thugs-su mtshon-pas...

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.15]

OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKĀYA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/
HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀVĀG VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀCITTA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/
HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀNURĀGAṆA
VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHAPŪJĀ VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM
[15] ...

Commentary:

[ii. Secondly, there are the mantras through which power is introduced, and blessing conferred by the five enlightened families. (It comments on Ch. 7.15):]

OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKĀYA VAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/
HAM means "I am the great natural expression of indestructible reality, the buddha-body of all the Tathāgatas". Similarly, VĀKVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of buddha-speech, CITTAVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of buddha-mind, ANURĀGANA VAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of enlightened attributes, and PŪJĀVAJRA indicates the indestructible reality of enlightened activity. Through these (mantras), the five Tathāgatas are visually created in the five centres of all the deities. More than twenty-one thousand buddhas abide in this illuminating contemplation because they are visualised within the five centres (of the deities). The number twenty-one thousand refers to the blessings of the buddha-body, speech and mind.[1]

It says in the Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The great assembled host, emanating light-rays
From the syllables which fill their three centres,
Absorb the three world-systems in their blessing and lustre.
The three centres of natural indestructible reality
Manifest in and of themselves as two kinds of seed (syllable).[2]

So in addition to these, there are enlightened attributes and activities which emanate from the syllables SVA and HA in the navel and secret

centres respectively.

As the same text says:

In the moon-discs of the two centres—
The navel and the one associated with it—[3]
The two pale green syllables SVĀ and HĀ
Emanate and absorb their corresponding light-rays.
Whereby enlightened attributes and perfect charisma are possessed.

Therefore (the deities) are adorned by the five enlightened families of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities.

[iii. Thirdly, there is the appearance of the blessings which emerge therefrom. (It comments on Ch. 7.16):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the composition of this number through the multiplication of the blessings of buddha-body, speech and mind, see below. Ch. 8, pp. 736-741.

[2]:

I.e. the syllables OM, ĀḤ, HŪM in the three centres of crown, throat and heart, which are identified respectively with buddha-body, speech and mind, manifest also as the seed-syllables, SVĀ and HĀ, indicating enlightened attributes and activities.

[3]:

Tibetan lte-ba rnam-gnyis zla-ba-la indicates the navel and secret centres.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.16]

At these mantras, (the blessings) dissolved, radiated, and blazed forth.
[16]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / thim-par-gyur / gsal-bar-gyur 'bar-bar-gyur-to / [16]

Commentary:

[iii. Thirdly, there is the appearance of the blessings which emerge therefrom. (It comments on Ch. 7.16):]

At these (zhes brjod-pas) mantras which confer empowerment and blessing, the blessings granted through the power of those deities dissolved (thim-par gyur) indivisibly in the body, speech and mind of those to be trained, whereby the five poisons of conflicting emotion radiated (gsal-bar gyur) as the essence of the five pristine cognitions, and whereby all the components, sensory bases and activity fields blazed forth ('bar-bar gyur-to) light as the maṇḍala of the deities.

[Establishing the Nature of the Secret Mantras (270.5-276.5)]

The third part (of this chapter) is the establishing of the nature (of the secret mantras—see p. 688). It has five sections, namely: the Inexpressible essence of buddha-speech; its inconceivable natural expression; its originally pure abiding nature; its supreme apparitional nature; and its mode of being which does not deviate from the expanse.

[i. Among these, the first (section on the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech comments on Ch. 7.17):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.17]

Emaho! This wondrous, marvelous reality—
The Buddha-speech of all perfect Buddhas.
Transcends all sounds, names and words,
But clearly emerges as diverse sounds. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

e-ma-ho ngo-mtshar rmad-kyi chos /
rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas kun-gyi gsung /
sgra-dang ming-tshig kun-las-'das /
sna-tshogs sgra-rnams gsal-bar 'byung / [17]

Commentary:

[i. Among these, the first (section on the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech comments on Ch. 7.17):]

Emaho! (e-ma-ho) is an exclamation of wonder at the mystery of the Tathāgatas' speech, an inconceivable topic, which is particularly sublime. This reality (chos), wondrous (ngo-mtshar) and marvelous (rmad-kyi) in nature, is the buddha-speech of all (kun-gyi gsung) genuinely perfect

buddhas (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas), a sacred wheel of inexhaustible adornment. This essential nature of buddha-speech is wondrous in that it transcends all (kun-las 'das) expressive sounds (sgra) and (dang) the names and words (ming-tshig) applied to phenomena, but, at the same time, it is wondrous because it clearly emerges (gsal-bar 'byung) as the immeasurable languages or sounds (sgra-rnams), which comprise the diverse (sna-tshogs) excellent intonations of speech, corresponding to the perception of living beings.

[ii. The second (the inconceivable natural expression of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.18):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.18]

The aspects of the maṇḍala of unique Buddha-speech

Are inconceivable and all-pervasive.

Perceived in distinct sounds, names and words.

All these are the supreme seal of buddha-speech. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

gsung-gcig dkyil-'khor yan-lag-ni /
bsam-gyis mi-khyab kun-tu khyab /
sgra-dang ming-tshig so-sor grags /
thams-cad gsung-gi phyag-rgya'i mchog / [18]

Commentary:

[ii. The second (the inconceivable natural expression of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.18):]

The unique buddha-speech (gsung-gcig) of the buddhas, adorned with sixty aspects of intonation, is the genuine maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor). its sixty aspects (yan-lag-ni) include six categories, namely, Brahmā-like voice, orchestral sound, song & dance, cuckoo-like trill, thunderous bass, and echo—each of which has ten features, i.e. they give rise to perception, they are apperceptive, audible, harmonious, most profound, consecutive, imperturbable, euphonous, orderly, and exceedingly clear; making sixty aspects in all.[1]

Alternatively, (buddha-speech) has ten features, namely, greatness of melody, pervasiveness, swift appreciation, precision, one-pointed audio-visual attention, momentariness, total accessibility, devotion, sublimation, and the discipline of all (beings), each of which has six sections, making sixty in all.[2]

When the (former sixty aspects) are combined with (the latter ten features), there are six hundred aspects of intonation. These multiply to six thousand and then to twenty-four thousand when each is subdivided according to the ten directions and the four times. Then, when subdivided according to the six world-systems, the aspects (of buddha-speech) are inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab) in number, and they are pervasive (khyab) in all (kun-tu) fields.

These (aspects) are perceived (grags) and understood in accordance with the languages or sounds (sgra-dang) of distinct sentient beings. and their appearance as distinct (so-sor) names and words (ming-tshig). All these (thama-cad) languages are indeed shown to be gathered in the nature of the inexpressible supreme seal of buddha-speech (gsung-gi phyag-rgya'i mchog).

[iii. The third (the originally pure abiding nature of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.19):][3]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"Brahma-like voice" (tshangs-pa'i dbyangs), "orchestral sound" (sil-snyan), "song & dance" (glu-gar), "cuckoo-like trill" (ka-la-ping-ka), "thunderous bass" ('brug-sgra), "echo" (sgra-brnyan), "giving rise to perception" ('du-shes bskyed-pa), "apperceptive" (rnam-par rig-pa), "audible" (mnyan-par 'os-pa), "harmonious" (mi-mthun-pa med-pa), "most profound" (shin-tu zab-pa), "consecutive" (rles-su 'byung-ba), "imperturbable" (gang-gis mi-tshugs-pa), "euphonous" (rna-bar snyan-pa), "orderly" (rnam-par ma-khrugs-pa), and "exceedingly clear" (shin-tu gsal-ba). For an enumeration of the actual sixty aspects of buddha-speech formed by the combination of these modes, see Mahāvvyutpatti 445-504 and the translation provided in T. Ellingson, *The Maṇḍala of Sound: Concepts and Sound Structures in Tibetan*, Pt. 1, pp. 122-123.

[2]:

"greatness of melody" (gdangs che-ba), "pervasiveness" (yongs-su khyab-pa), "swift appreciation" (go-bar myur-pa), "precision" (the-tshom gcod-pa), "one-pointed audio-visual attention" (gcig-la gzigs-pa snyam byed-pa), "momentariness" (nyi-tsher ston-pa), "total accessibility" (kun-nas jug-pa), "devotion" ('dun-pa bskyed-pa), "sublimation" (khyab-du zhugs-pa), and "discipline of all beings" (thams-cad 'dul-ba).

[3]:

See above, p. 662, where this section is referred to as the appendix of buddha-speech in twenty-one pādas.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.19]

From the Magical Net, supreme among tantras.
Emerge the meanings of Buddha-speech, endowed with bliss.
And yet all these are lotus-like in their disposition.
Thus, the path of liberation or release
And the sounds of saṃsāra, as many as are expressed.
Are the supreme Buddha-speech.
All higher and lower vehicles, and the languages
Of all erroneous destinies, without exception.
Are subsumed in Buddha-speech.
The indestructible reality of enlightenment. [19] ...

[Tibetan]

rgyud-mchog sgyu-'phrul dra-ba-las /
bde-ldan gsung-gi don 'byung-ba'ang /
thams-cad padma'i ngang-gyur-na /
grol-thar lam-dang 'khor-ba'i sgra /
ji-skad brjod-kyang gsung-mchog-ste /
theg-pa mtho-dman thams-cad-dang /
log-gro ma-lus thams-cad skad /
byang-chub rdo-rje'i gsung-du bsdu / [19]

Commentary:

[iii. The third (the originally pure abiding nature of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.19):][1]

From the (las) hundred-thousand chapters of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba), supreme among (mchog) all tantras (rgyud), the meanings of buddha-speech (gsung-gi don) emerge ('byung-ba) because it is the doctrinal sound or causal basis endowed with (ldan) inestimable (interim) benefit and (ultimate) bliss (bde) for the sake of living beings.[2] And yet ('ang), all these (thams-cad) phenomena (or doctrines) are primordially lotus-like in their disposition (padma'i ngang-gyur), the reality untainted by blemishes from the beginning. Thus (na) the essence of sound or language is indeed shown to be the essence of naturally pure reality or emptiness. For this reason, the language of the vehicles which indicate the path of liberation or release (grol-thar lam) and (dang) the diverse languages or sounds of saṃsāra ('khor-ba'i sgra) associated with desire and similar states of existence, as many as are expressed, (ji-skad brjod), all do not transcend reality. They are in fact its uncreated echoes. They are the inexpressible nature of supreme buddha-speech (gsung-mchog-ste), the primordially pure essential nature.

All (thams-cad) languages or sounds associated with the higher and lower vehicles (theg-pa mtho-dman) of the path to release, and (dang) the languages (skad) or sounds of all (thams-cad) sentient beings without

exception (ma-lus) including those of the three erroneous (log) evil destinies ('gro) are actually subsumed (bsdus) in (du) the inexpressible buddha-speech (gsung), the indestructible reality (rdo-rje) or abiding nature of primordial enlightenment (byang-chub), the essence of uncreated echo, where the positive and the negative are without duality.

[iv. The fourth (the supreme apparitional nature of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.20):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, p. 662, where this section is referred to as the appendix of buddha-speech in twenty-one pādas.

[2]:

Tibetan Phan-bde.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.20]

This subsumption is perceived in the ten directions.
Sound itself is enunciated in its unborn disposition.
But when spoken it is the inexpressible;
And this same inexpressible nature
Comprises the diverse sounds.
Perceptible to all but differently appraised.
Real meaning is differently interpreted.
In the case of a single word.
As for example the phrase "removal of numbness" [or "sneeze"].
This is the king, the supreme Buddha-speech. [20] ...

[Tibetan]

bsdus-nyid phyogs-bcur rnam-par grags /
sgra-nyid ma-chags ngang-du gsungs /
gsung-pa-nyid-na brjod-du med /
brjod-med de-nyid sna-tshogs-sgra /
kun-la grags-shing so-sor mjal /
dper-na de-bzhin sbrid-sangs-bzhin /
gsung-gcig sgra-yis so-sor go /
de-ni gsung-mchog rgyal-po yin / [20]

Commentary:

[iv. The fourth (the supreme apparitional nature of buddha-speech, comments on Ch. 7.20):]

From the disposition of this subsumption (bsdus-nyid) in the inexpressible essence of buddha-speech, an inestimable number of doctrines is perceived (rnam-par grags) and understood through its many emanations in the ten directions (phyogs-bcur). This perceived sound (sgra) of the doctrine is itself (nyid) enunciated (gsung) in (du) its unborn (ma-chags) primordial disposition (ngang) which accords with the perception of those to be trained; but at the time when (nyid-na) it is spoken (gsungs), it is the inexpressible (brjod-du med) essence of buddha-speech. This same (de-nyid) inexpressible abiding nature is a source which comprises sounds (sgra) of diverse (sna-tshogs) expression. It is perceptible (grags) to all (kun-la) those who require training in identical words, but (shing) its meanings are differently appraised (so-sor mjal). The real meaning (de-bzhin) of a single expression or sound (is differently understood), as for example (dper-na) the phrase "removal of numbness" [or "sneeze"] (sbrid-sangs-bzhin)[1] which is understood by some to mean the removal of numbness caused by poison, by some to mean the removal of numbness caused by defective posture, and by others to mean the removal of numbness caused by gnostic mantras. In the case of even a single word (gsung-gcig-sgra-yis) of the Tathāgatas', all doctrines corresponding to the thoughts of different sentient beings appear to be differently interpreted (so-sor go). This (de-ni) is (yin) the nature of the genuine supreme buddha-speech (gsung mchog), the king (rgyal-po) of all linguistic phenomena or sounds.

Accordingly, it says in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

A single intonation of the conquerors' speech
Which appears through the merits and deeds of living beings
Is heard differently, by dint of volition.
This Indeed is the mystery of buddha-speech.

It is the profound coincidence of natural blessing that (buddha-speech) appears in this way through the power of spirituality although it is unspoken by the buddhas.

Concerning this passage of the text, there are some who claim that the Tathāgata had sneezed (sbrid-pa sangs) at the entrance to his citadel, and that this was differently interpreted by an invalid, a nurse, and a doctor. Such persons, however, do not differentiate between sound and its meanings![2]

[v. The fifth section (the mode of being which does not deviate from the expanse) has three parts, among which the first teaches that although (buddha-speech) appears as the different vehicles its essence is unspoken. (It comments on Ch. 7.21):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This phrase can be rendered in English either formally as "removal of numbness", which corresponds to the meanings given immediately below, or colloquially as "sneezing", which is the meaning implied in the following paragraph.

[2]:

N.L., but cf. the incident recorded in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, p. 39, where Prajāpati, Śākyamuni's nurse, on hearing him sneeze, mistakenly encourages the view of permanence.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.21]

Although there are unthinkable higher and lower vehicles.
They are not spoken in isolation from the real nature.
Although they are heard differently as skillful means
For the sake of those to be trained.
And all pronouncements are expressed accordingly.
They are unspoken, according to the real nature. [21] ...

[Tibetan]

theg-pa mtho-dman bsam-yas-kyang /
de-bzhin-nyid-las ma-gsungs-te /
gdul-bya'i thabs-su so-sor thos /
ji-ltar gsung-rab kun-brjod-kyang /
de-bzhin-nyid-kyis gsungs-pa med / [21]

Commentary:

[v. The fifth section (the mode of being which does not deviate from the expanse) has three parts, among which the first teaches that although (buddha-speech) appears as the different vehicles its essence is unspoken. (It comments on Ch. 7.21):]

Although (kyang) there are unthinkable (bsam-yas) higher and lower vehicles (theg-pa mtho-dman) which appear to be spoken, they are not spoken (ma-gsungs te) at all in isolation from (las) reality or the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid).

It says appropriately in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. (15-93):

From the time when I attained perfect Buddha-hood until my final nirvāṇa, I did not teach any doctrine, but it appeared differently from the real nature in accordance with the volition of living beings. This indeed is the inconceivable mystery of the Buddha's speech.

Although words are not actually spoken, they are heard differently (so-sor thos) by sentient beings as (su) the enumeration of doctrines which are learned in the skillful means (thabs) of training for the sake of those to be trained (gdul-bya'i). Although (kyang) all (kun) pronouncements (gsung-rab) of the Tathāgata included in the twelve branches are ostensibly expressed (brjod) according (ji-ltar) to the manner in which the lamp of the five aforementioned vehicles is arrayed,[1] if appraised according to (kyis) the abiding mode of reality or the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid), they are the conclusive buddha-body of reality, and therefore unspoken (gsungs-ba-med) even minutely as a doctrinal enumeration.

It says in the Cutter of Indestructible Reality (T. 16):

Those who see me as form.
Those who perceive me as sound.
Those persons, who remain on the false path.
Do not perceive me—
For the Buddhas perceive reality.
The Guides are the body of reality,
And reality is not a knowable object.
As such, it cannot be known.

[The second part concerns the appearance of the indestructible buddha-speech for the sake of living beings through its disposition of spirituality. (It comments on Ch. 7.22):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As explained in Ch. 3, pp. 505-518, these are the yāna & devayāna, the śrāvakayāna, the pratyekabuddhayāna, the bodhisattvayāna, and the vajrayāna or guhyamantrayāna.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.22]

The unwritten and the buddha-speech of awareness
Do not emerge on the tip of the Buddha-tongue.
Yet, by the blessing of the Buddha-speech of spirituality.
Diverse meanings are distinctly clarified
For the sake of living beings. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

yi-ge med-dang rig-pa'i gsung /
ljags-kyi rtse-mor ma-phyung-yang /

thugs-rje gsung-gi byin-brlabs-kyis /
'gro-don sna-tshogs so-sor gsal / [22]

Commentary:

[The second part concerns the appearance of the indestructible buddha-speech for the sake of living beings through its disposition of spirituality. (It comments on Ch. 7.22):]

The object that is to be expressed is the unwritten (yi-ge-med) abiding nature and (dang) expressive words (concerning it) which appear to be spoken are the buddha-speech (gsung) of the sugatas' awareness (rig-pa'i). Though they are heard by living beings, from the moment when they are heard they do not emerge (ma-phyung) on the tip of the buddha-tongue (ljags-kyi rtse-mor) as sounds and words with individual characteristics. Yet (yang), by the blessing (byin-rlabs-kyis) of (gi) naturally present pristine cognition, the buddha-speech (gsung) of the conquerors' spirituality (thugs-rje), diverse (sna-tshogs) words and meanings (don) are distinctly clarified (so-sor gsal) and heard for the sake of living beings ('gro) who are trained, corresponding to their volition. This is the indestructible reality of buddha-speech.

[The third part exemplifies (the buddha-speech) which appears to be spoken although it is not spoken. (It comments on Ch. 7.23):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.23]

Those that are clarified are themselves
The supreme indestructible buddha-speech.
The real nature is such that the meanings of buddha-speech
For the sake of living beings
Do not stray from the disposition of the real.
Just as, for example, the sound of an echo. [23] ...

[Tibetan]

gsal-nyid gsung-gi rdo-rje'i mchog /
de-bzhin gsung-gi 'gro-don-rnams /
de-bzhin ngang-las ma-gYos-kyang /
dper-na brag-ca'i sgra-bzhin-no / [23]

Commentary:

[The third part exemplifies (the buddha-speech) which appears to be spoken although it is not spoken. (It comments on Ch. 7.23):]

Those words and meanings of the doctrine which appear in that manner through the spirituality of the buddhas and the volition of sentient beings, and that are clarified (gsal) in the ears of those to be trained are themselves (nyid) the genuine supreme indestructible buddha-speech (gsung-gi rdo-rie mchog), uncreated from the beginning. The real nature (de-bzhin) of the doctrine which is inexpressible but appears to trainees is such that the meanings (don-rnams) of buddha-speech (gsung-gi) which emerge for the sake of living beings ('gro) are manifest in and of themselves, and indeed do not waver from the disposition of (ngang-las ma-gYos kyang) the expanse or the real (de-bzhin). Just as (bzhin-no), for example (dper-na) the sound of an echo (brag-ca'i sgra) does not exist at all—either in the person, the rock or in the space between them, but emerges through conditions in an appropriate form of verbal expression, so it is through the condition of the pure deeds of trainees and the cause of the Buddhas' spirituality that (buddha-speech) appears in the form of the doctrine.

It is also said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

Just as the sound of an echo
Emerges through the perception of others.
The buddha-speech of the Tathāgatas
Does not abide either externally or internally.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 7.24:]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 7.24]

This completes the seventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real, entitled The Absorption of the Mandala and the Secret Mantras. [24]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las dkyil-'khor bsdu-s-pa-dang gsang-sngags-kyi le'u-ste bdun-pa'o / [24]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 7.24:)]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the seventh chapter (le'u-ste bdun-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of buddha-speech,

Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) nature which apparently emerges from the inexpressible according to volition, entitled (kyi) The Absorption of the Mandala (dkyil-'khor bsdus-pa) and (dang) the revelation of the nature of the Secret Mantras (gsang-sngags) of the different deities.

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Chapter 8 - Consecration of All Limbs as the Maṇḍala

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[Full title: Consecration of All Limbs as the Maṇḍala and the Subsequent Emanation of the Seals]

Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression which is said to consecrate spontaneously all the limbs as the maṇḍala. [1]

Manifestly perfect through the Magical Net,
All things are (sealed by) the seal of supreme enlightenment.

This seal of the Secret Nucleus Definitive
With Respect to the Real is hard to transcend. [2]

The union (which comes about) through combination
Of two sets of five, namely.
The syllables on the solar disks of Akṣobhya
And the syllables on the lunar disks of Ratnasambhava,
Is the causal basis for the emergence of seals or hand-emblems. [3]

The two syllables OM̐ and MŪM̐ unite at their (finger)-tips;
And the (remaining) eight seed-syllables conjoin,
Meeting at their (finger)-tips.
They form the seal granting supreme bliss.
In which all conquerors are equipoised. [4]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable HŪM̐
Appears a blazing vajra.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell
And, with an embrace, support it on "reality". [5]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MŪM̐
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [6]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable OM̐ is a blazing wheel.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [7]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable LĀM̐,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [8]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable SVĀ is a blazing gem.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [9]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MĀM̐,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [10]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.

On his raised (finger)–tip with the syllable ĀṂ is a blazing lotus.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [11]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)–tip with the syllable PĀṂ,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [12]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)–tip with the syllable HĀ is a blazing sword.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [13]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable TĀṂ,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [14]

Then there are the symbolic hand-emblems.
Which begin with the night lotus and the orange tree—
Namely, the shoot of gems, the blazing sword.
The white lotus, the blazing vajra,
The doctrinal wheel, and the corn-ear of gems.
And there are the beauteous form, the garland of gems,
The lute and the supreme dancing gesture.
The flower-garland, the supreme incense,
The butter-lamp, the scented oil and so forth.
(The female Bodhisattvas) embrace "activity"
And (the male Bodhisattvas) support (a bell) on "reality".
Their heads are tilted and bowed.
As in the case of the aforementioned great seal.
They embrace in the disposition of the non-dual expanse. [15]

The seals or hand-emblems of the wrathful deities
At the four gates are respectively
The cudgel surmounted by human skulls which is brandished.
The vajra which subjugates,
The skull with large snakes which subjugates,
The crossed-vajra which subjugates through activity.
The iron hook, the lasso, the iron chain, and the bell.
Abiding at the four gates,
These (deities) bow and embrace in the previous manner. [16]

The six sages have diverse seals.
When subsumed, they number six seals.
Their female consort is the non-referential expanse of reality.[17]

Samantabhadra is meditatively equipoised.

His pristine cognitions diffused.
The one who is his female consort
Is perfect in sameness.
And seated in the lotus posture. [18]

There are, moreover, diverse modes of seal or hand-emblem—
Alternatively, the very (seals should be applied)
Of their (respective) Tathāgatas,
Or the gesture of the "indestructible palms". [19]

If the supreme provision of the great seal
Is encountered by one of skillful means and discriminative awareness.
There is neither stirring nor movement.
All things in their entirety
Abide in the disposition of the great seal. [20]

The limbs (of the central deity)
Are endowed with the forty-two (deities). [21]

These themselves emanate limbs.
And the forty-two then become diffused threefold. [22]

(Illustrated) by the supreme central deity
Who is endowed in this way.
The conquerors and the supreme conqueror
Are similarly endowed.
As are the twelve (surrounding pairs of Bodhisattvas).
And the six (sages) who have a diffusion of blazing light. [23]
Including these, (the maṇḍala) is inconceivable. [24]

In the unthinkable ten directions and four times
The purposes of training are differently revealed. [25]
As all the vehicles—high and low,
As the erroneous and unthinkable (numerous beings).
And as all great assemblies of peaceful & wrathful deities.
They are everywhere perceived, differently
And corresponding (to volition). [26]

As, for example, in the case of a dancer,
This diverse (movement) is revealed
But not depicted in Isolation
From the body (of pristine cognition). [27]

In brief, all seals or hand-emblems
Cannot be described as "this" or as "merely one".
But they are emanated twice and thrice.
This movement & emanation are indeed the real nature. [28]

In brief, all movement and stirring in their entirety
Abide in the disposition of the great seal,
But their abiding nature does not abide.
Indeed there is no such abiding at all.

—Such was explained by the pure supreme one himself. [29]

This completes the eighth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to The Real, entitled the Consecration of All Limbs as the Maṇḍala and the Subsequent Emanation of the Seals or Hand-Emblems. [30]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.1]

Then all the Tathāgatas uttered this meaningful expression which is said to consecrate spontaneously all the limbs as the maṇḍala. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis / yan-lag thams-cad
dkyil-'khor-du lhun-gyis grub-par byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba 'di ched-du
brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (276.6-294.5):]

The second branch (of the maṇḍala of contemplation, see p. 688) concerns the maṇḍala-array of the seals or hand-emblems of buddha-body. It has two parts—an abbreviated teaching on the emanation of this maṇḍala and a detailed exegesis of its nature.

[The former (276.6-277.2, comments on Ch. 8.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of the secret mantras had been revealed, then all the Tathāgatas (de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyis) uttered this meaningful expression which is said to consecrate (byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba 'di ched-du brjod-do) naturally and spontaneously (lhun-gyis grub-par) all (thams-cad) the limbs (yan-lag), head, and other organs of the body as the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-du) of deities.

[Detailed Exegesis of the Nature of the Mandala of Seals (277.2—294.5)]

The latter has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the maṇḍala of seals which forms the spontaneous ground; a detailed exegesis of the maṇḍala of seals through which the path is actually attained; and a synopsis of the maṇḍala of seals according to the resultant supreme pristine cognition.

[General Teaching on the Mandala of Seals Forming 'the Spontaneous Ground (277-3-278.2):]

[This (comments on Ch. 8.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.2]

Manifestly perfect through the Magical Net,
All things are (sealed by) the seal of supreme enlightenment.
This seal of the Secret Nucleus Definitive
With Respect to the Real is hard to transcend. [2] ...

[Tibetan]

sgyu-'phrul dra-bas mngon-rdzogs-pa /
thams-cad byang-chub mchog-gi rgya /
gsang-ba de-nyid nges-pa-yi /
snying-po'i phyag-rgya 'da'-dka'o / [2]

Commentary:

[Detailed Exegesis of the Nature of the Mandala of Seals (277.2-294.5)]

The latter has three parts, namely: a general teaching on the maṇḍala of seals which forms the spontaneous ground; a detailed exegesis of the maṇḍala of seals through which the path is actually attained; and a synopsis of the maṇḍala of seals according to the resultant supreme pristine cognition.

[General Teaching on the Mandala of Seals Forming 'the Spontaneous Ground (277.3-278.2):]

[This (comments on Ch. 8.2):]

All things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, subsumed in the components, sensory bases and activity fields abide through (-bas) the essence of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra), where buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction. They are identified as that in which manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa) Buddhahood is primordially attained, in the manner of fire and the heat which is its natural expression. In this way, all things (thams-cad) are said to be primordially sealed by Samantabhadra, the seal of supreme enlightenment (byang-chub mchog-gi rgya). When their naturally pure abiding nature is sealed by this seal (phyag-rgya) of the nucleus (snying-po'i) of unchanging reality, i.e. the kingly Secret (gsang-ba) Nucleus Definitive With Respect To The Real (de-nyid nges-pa-yi), [1] it is said to be hard to transcend ('da'-dka'-o). This is because it does not transcend the natural Great Perfection

of sameness, and because it does not extraneously deviate from that never changing disposition.

The Intermediate Mother (T. 9) accordingly says:

Subhūti, just as for example the sky neither increases when praised by anyone, nor decreases when disparaged by anyone, similarly this reality or real nature of all things neither increases nor decreases, whether the Tathāgatas come Into the world or whether they do not.

[Detailed Exegesis of the Mandala of Seals through which the Path is Attained (278.2-288.4):]

This is threefold: the causal basis for the emergence of the seals or hand-emblems; the general sea] which thence emerges; and the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from it.

[The first (comments on Ch. 8.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The title of this tantra-text itself exemplifies the ultimate seal of Samantabhadra.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.3]

The union (which comes about) through combination

Of two sets of five, namely.

The syllables on the solar disks of Akṣobhya

And the syllables on the lunar disks of Ratnasambhava,

Is the causal basis for the emergence of seals or hand-emblems. [3] ...

[Tibetan]

mi-bskyod nyi-ma'i dkyil yi-ge /

rin-chen zla-ba'i dkyil yi-ge /

lnga-gnyis zung-du sprad-pa-las /

sbyar-bas phyag-rgya 'byung-ba'i rgyu / [3]

Commentary:

[Detailed Exegesis of the Mandala of Seals through which the Path is Attained (278.2-288.4):]

This is threefold: the causal basis for the emergence of the seals or hand-emblems; the general sea] which thence emerges; and the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from it.

[The first (comments on Ch. 8.3):]

In general, the head (of the body) is described as the essence of the Tathāgata (Vairocana), the right hand as that of Akṣobhya,[1] the left hand as that of Ratnasambhava, the left foot as that of Amitābha, and the right foot as that of Amoghasiddhi. Then, among the fingers which are the appendages (of those hands), the middle one represents the enlightened family of indestructible reality, the index finger represents the enlightened family of the tathāgata, the thumb represents the enlightened family of gemstones, the fourth finger represents the enlightened family of the lotus, and the little finger represents the enlightened family of activity.

In this context, the hand-gesture known as the "indestructible palms" (rdo-rje thal-mo) is the causal basis of the seals or hand-emblems. It is described as follows: On the tips of the five fingers of the right hand or Akṣobhya (mi-bskyod), on the five solar disks (nyi-ma'i dkyil), the size of round grains, are respectively the syllables (yi-ge) HŪṂ, OM, SVĀ, ĀṂ, and HĀ. These are the five (seed)-syllables of the male consorts of skillful means. And on the five fingers of the left hand or Ratnasambhava (rin-chen), on five lunar disks (zla-ba'i dkyil) the size of grains or amulets there are respectively arrayed the five syllables (yi-ge) MŪṂ, LĀṂ, MĀṂ, PĀṂ, and TĀṂ which belong to the female consorts of discriminative awareness. The union (sbyar-bas) in the gesture of "indestructible palms" which comes about through (las) the respective combination (zung-du sprad-pa) of those two sets of five (lnga-gnyis), namely, the five fingers of the right hand and those of the left hand, is the causal basis for the emergence of ('byung-ba'i rgyu) the seals or hand-emblems (phyag-rgya) belonging to the different deities.

According to the claims of the bLa-ma Rong-zom-pa, this gesture comprises both the commitment seal (samayamudrā) and the action seal (karmamudrā). Buddhaguhya asserts that it comprises three kinds of seal, namely, the commitment seal, the doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā) during meditation on those seed-syllables, and the action seal during the transformation (of the fingers). However, all four seals—the great seal, the doctrinal seal, the commitment seal and the action seal are actually complete therein. The great seal is Included during the apparitional or rainbow-like meditation on one's own (body) as the deity; the doctrinal seal is Included during the meditation on seed-syllables upon the fingers of the hands; the commitment seal is included during meditation on the symbolic hand-emblems such as the vajra which emerge therefrom; and the action seal is included during the transformation (of the fingers) and the consequent embrace of the right and left hands. So it is that in this context the (four kinds of seal) are perfectly explained.

[The second is the general seal which emerges thence. (It comments on Ch. 8.4):]

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[1]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, pp. 225-6, concurs in this description of Vairocana and Akṣobhya, citing in support Vimalamitra's *Guhyagarbhaṇḍārtha*.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.4]

The two syllables OM̐ and MŪM̐ unite at their (finger)-tips;
And the (remaining) eight seed-syllables conjoin,
Meeting at their (finger)-tips.
They form the seal granting supreme bliss.
In which all conquerors are equipoised. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

om̐-dang mūm̐-gnyis rtse-sbyar-te /
'bru-brgyad bsnol-nas rtse-sprad-pa /
rgyal-ba kun-dang mnyam-sbyor-ba'i /
bde-ba chen-po sbyin-pa'i rgya / [4]

Commentary:

[The second is the seneral seal which emerges thence. (It comments on Ch. 8.4):]

The two syllables (gnyis)—the OM̐ which is visualised on the index finger of the right hand, and (dang) the MŪM̐ which is visualised on the middle finger of the left hand—unite (sbyar-te) directly at their (finger)-tips (rtse); and the remaining eight seed-syllables ('bru-brgyad) of the right and left hands, namely HŪM̐ and LĀM̐, SVĀ and MĀM̐, ĀM̐ and PĀM̐, and HĀ and TĀM̐ respectively conjoin (bsnol-nas). Meeting at their (finger)-tips (rtse sprad-pa) they form the seal (rgya), granting (sbyin-pa'i) in this very lifetime the supreme bliss (bde-ba chen-po) of accomplishment in which all conquerors (rgyal-ba kun) of the five enlightened families are essentially equipoised (mnyam-sbyor-ba'i).

It also says in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

The fingers are entwined and press down:
The middle & index fingers, thumbs & little fingers
Are made to meet at their respective tips.
While the fourth fingers are raised into position—
This is the commitment seal.

Now, Buddhaguhya holds this to be the general commitment seal of the five enlightened families, i.e. the seal of one-pointed pristine cognition or buddha-mind, in which the vajra is tightly held and the two middle fingers then extended into position. There are also some who hold that, in this gesture of "indestructible palms", the index finger of the right hand and the middle finger of the left hand both meet at their tips, while the remainder are respectively united.[1]

The general form (of this seal) should indeed be read in accordance with the passage from the Lasso of Skillful Means, but it in no way contradicts the latter two (interpretations), according to which the fingers are conjoined in the described manner because they correspond to the actual appearance of the five enlightened families (in particular contexts). [2]

[Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from that (general seal). This has five parts of which the first, concerning the seals of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families, itself comprises five stanzas.]

[The first of these, concerning the seals of the central deities, i.e. the male a female (Vairocana, comments on Ch. 8.5):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"gesture of the indestructible palms " (rdo-rje thal-mo).

[2]:

These variations on the general seal depend on the different seed-syllables, which change owing to the the rotation of the central deities.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.5-6]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.

On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable HŪṂ

Appears a blazing vajra.

Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed

Seed-syllables which ring a bell

And, with an embrace, support it on "reality". [5]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.

On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MŪṂ

A ringing bell blazes forth.

On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".

And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [6] ...

[Tibetan]

'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
hūṃ-bsgreng rtse-mor rdo-rje 'bar /
zla-brtul 'bru-sbas dril-gsil-zhing /
'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis chos-la-brten / [5]
'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar-bkan /
mūṃ-bsgreng rtse-mor dril-gsil 'bar /
nyi-ma 'bru-lnga las-su 'khril /
btud-de 'dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta / [6]

Commentary:

[Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the different deities which emanate from that (general seal). This has five parts of which the first, concerning the seals of the male & female consorts of the five enlightened families, itself comprises five stanzas.]

[The first of these, concerning the seals of the central deities, i.e. the male a female (Vairocana, comments on Ch. 8.5):]

The great seal (mahāmudrā) is applied by meditation on oneself as the buddha-body of the central deity (Vairocana). The binding commitment seal[1] is applied when, from that disposition, the four (bzhi) other seed-syllables ('bru) apart from the syllable HŪM are concealed (sbas) on (the respective fingers of) his right hand clenched in the gesture of the "indestructible fist" (rdo-rje khu-tshur); M and (nas), behind the raised middle finger, cohere (bkan) at his heart (thugs-kar).

The doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā) is then applied when HŪM is visualised in the middle of a lunar disk on the tip (rtse-mor) of his raised (bsgreng) middle finger, identified with the syllable HŪM. The visualised commitment seal[2] is applied when this syllable HŪM melts into light, from which there then appears a five-pronged vajra (rdo-rje) blazing ('bar) forth light.

Meanwhile, his left hand forms the "indestructible fist" and then restrained (brtul) within it are the syllables on their lunar disks (zla). These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) representing the female warriors which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) with their indestructible fist, and (zhing) clasp his female consort (Dhātviśvarī). With an embrace ('khril-ba'i tshul) they place the bell on (la) Amitābha, i.e. the left thigh of his female consort or "reality" (chos). and they support it (brten) at her side. This is the seal of the male consort through which the male consort (Vairocana) makes offerings to the female consort (Dhātviśvarī). When applied, it is explained to be the action seal (karmamudrā). While that hand-emblem (the bell) resounds on his left side, the visualised doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā) is applied when his (other) symbolic hand-emblem (the vajra) dissolves into the heart-centre of his female consort, and the expressed doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā) is applied when he utters HŪM VAJRADHṚK.[3] In this way there are seven

aspects gathered within the nature of the four seals: Both the visualised commitment seal and the binding commitment seal are included in the commitment seal (samayamudrā). Both the visualised doctrinal seal and the expressed doctrinal seal are included in the doctrinal seal (dharmamudrā). The other (two seals) should be known as described.

As for the seal of the female consort (Dhātviśvarī): The great seal is applied during meditation on oneself as Vajradhātviśvarī. The commitment seal is applied from this disposition when, apart from the syllable MŪM, the other four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbas) within the lunar disks of her left hand, clenched in the "indestructible fist", and (nas) the middle finger coheres at her heart (thugs-kar bkan). The visualised commitment seal is applied when on the [raised] tip [bsgreng]-[rtse-mor] of the middle finger, itself expressed as MUM, there is visualised a ringing bell (dril-gsil) which blazes forth ('bar) from her syllable MŪM on its lunar disk. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) representing the male warriors are placed upon the right thigh of the male consort and embrace"activity", (i.e. the right foot or Amoghasiddhi, las-su-'khril). Locked in embrace, with her head slightly bowing (btud-de) towards the male consort, she looks on (blta) the face of her male consort with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis). The action seal is applied in this way. Then, the expressed doctrinal seal is applied when, ringing (the bell) or hand-emblem on her right side. and reciting MUM DHĀTVIŚVARĪ, her symbolic hand-emblem (the bell) is visualised to dissolve into the heart-centre of her male consort.

[Now, in order to illustrate the five pristine cognitions, there are genuine symbols such as the vajra and the wheel. In the aforementioned manner (of male & female Vairocana), these emblems extensively apply to the other (conquerors) as well.]

[(First), there are the seals of the male & female Akṣobhya (which comment on Ch. 8.7-8):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan bcing-ba dam-tshig-gi phyag-rgya.

[2]:

Tibetan bsam-pa dam-tshig-gi phyag-rgya.

[3]:

The visualised doctrinal seal (bsam-pa chos-kyi phyag-rgya) is contrasted with the expressed doctrinal seal (brjod-pa chos-kyi phyag-rgya').

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.7-8]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)–tip with the syllable OM is a blazing wheel.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [7]
Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)–tip with the syllable LĀṂ,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
om-bsgreng rtse-mor 'khor-lo 'bar /
zla-brtul 'bru-sbas dril-gsil zhing /
'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis chos-la-brten / [7]
'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
lāṁ-bsgreng rtse-mor dril-gsil 'bar /
nyi-ma 'bru-lnga las-su 'khril /
btud-de 'dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta / [8]

Commentary:

[Now, in order to illustrate the five pristine cognitions, there are genuine symbols such as the vajra and the wheel. in the aforementioned manner (of male & female Vairocana), these emblems extensively apply to the other (conquerors) as well.]

[(First), there are the seals of the male & female Akṣobhya (which comment on Ch. 8.7-8):]

Oneself is visualised as the deity (Akṣobhya), and in that disposition the right hand is clenched in the "indestructible fist". On its solar disks there are, apart from the syllable OM, four (bzhi) other seed-syllables ('bru) which are concealed (sbas) within it, and (nas). behind the raised (bsgreng) index finger, cohere at his heart (thugs-kar bkan). On the tip of his (rtse-mor) index finger with the syllable OM, the OM melts and therefrom is visualised a four-spoked wheel ('khor-lo) blazing ('bar) forth light. Meanwhile, the left hand forms the "indestructible fist" within which syllables are restrained (brtul) on their lunar disks (zla). These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) representing the female warriors which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) with their "indestructible fist", and (zhing) so clasp the female consort (Buddhalocanā). With an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gyis) they place (the bell) by her left thigh, and support it on "reality" (chos-la brten).

Again, (in the case of the female consort Buddhālokanā), there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) concealed (sbas-nas) within her right hand which cohere (bkan) behind the index finger at the heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) of her raised (bsgreng) index finger with the syllable LĀM the LĀM melts and therefrom a ringing bell (dril-gsil) blazes forth ('bar) light, pressing against the heart. Meanwhile, situated on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand, the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and, placed upon the right thigh of her male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And she looks on (blta) the male consort with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis), bowing (btud-de) slightly towards his face.

[The seals of the male & female Ratnasambhava (comment on Ch. 8.9-10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.9-10]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable SVĀ is a blazing gem.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [9]
Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable MĀM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity".
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
svā-bsgreng rtse-mor rin-chen 'bar /
zla-brtul 'bru-sbas dril-gsil-zhing /
'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis chos-la brten / [9]
'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
mām-bsgreng rtse-mor dril-gsil 'bar /
nyi-ma 'bru-lnga las-su 'khril /
btud-de 'dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta / [10]

Commentary:

[The seals of the male & female Ratnasambhava (comment on Ch. 8.9-10):]

Oneself is visualised as (Ratnasambhava), and then there are four seed-

syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within the right hand of the male consort, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the thumb at his heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the [raised] thumb with the syllable SVĀ (SVĀ-bsgreng), the SVĀ melts and thence there is visualised a gem (rin-chen) blazing ('bar) forth light and held at the heart. Meanwhile, situated on their lunar disks (zla) of his left hand, are the restrained (brtul) syllables. These are the five concealed (sbas) seed-syllables ('bru) which hold and ring (gsil) a bell (dril) and (zhing) clasp his female consort (Māmākī). With an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gyis) in which the male & female consorts are without duality, they support (brten) the bell at the side on (la) her left thigh, which is Amitābha or "reality" (chos).

Again, as for (the female consort Māmākī), there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within her left hand, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the thumb at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised thumb with the syllable MĀṂ (MĀṂ-bsgreng), a ringing bell (dril-gsil) is visual-ly created, to blaze forth ('bar) light from the MĀṂ, and it is held at her heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and, placed on the right thigh of the male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And, bowing (btud-de) in this guise towards the male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta). This is the seal or hand-emblem of the female consort (Māmākī).

[The seals of the male & female Amitābha (comment on Ch. 8.11-12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.11-12]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
 On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable ĀṂ is a blazing lotus.
 Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
 Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
 And with an embrace support it on "reality". [11]
 Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
 On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable PĀṂ,
 A ringing bell blazes forth.
 On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
 And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
 āṁ-bsgreng rtse-mor padma 'bar /
 zla-brtul 'bru-sbas dril-gsil-zhing /

'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis chos-la-brten / [11]
'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
pām-bsgreng rtse-mor dril-gsil 'bar /
nyi-ma 'bru-lnga las-su 'khril /
btud-de 'dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta / [12]

Commentary:

[The seals of the male & female Amitābha (comment on Ch. 8.11-12):]

One is visualised as (Amitābha). in that disposition, four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbas) within the right hand of the male consort, and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the raised fourth finger, at the heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised (bsgreng) fourth finger with the syllable ĀM, the ĀM melts and thence there is visualised a lotus (padma) blazing ('bar) forth light. Along with this hand-emblem at the heartcentre, the syllables of his left hand are restrained on their lunar disks (zla-brtul). These five seed-syllables ('bru) are concealed (sbas) within the left hand, while they hold and ring (gsil) the bell (dril) with their "indestructible fist", and (zhing) with an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gyis) of his female consort, support (brten) the bell at his side on (la) her left thigh, which is Amitābha or "reality" (chos).

Again, (as for the female consort Paṇḍaravāsini): there are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) which are concealed (sbas) within her left hand, and (nas) which cohere behind the fourth finger at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of (rtse-mor) the raised (bsgreng) fourth finger with the syllable PĀM, there is visualised from the PĀM a ringing bell (dril-gsil) which blazes forth ('bar) and is held at the heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and the fingers are placed on his right thigh where they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And bowing (btud-de) towards her male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta).

[The seals of the male & female Amoghasiddhi (comment on Ch. 8.13-14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.13-14]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at his heart.
On his raised (finger)-tip with the syllable HĀ is a blazing sword.
Restrained on their lunar disks are the concealed
Seed-syllables which ring a bell.
And with an embrace support it on "reality". [13]

Four seed-syllables are concealed and cohere at her heart.
On her raised (finger)-tip with the syllable TĀM,
A ringing bell blazes forth.
On solar disks five seed-syllables embrace "activity",
And bowing, she looks on with a smiling demeanour. [14] ...

[Tibetan]

'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
hā-bsgreng rtse-mor ral-gri 'bar /
zla-brtul 'bru-sbas dril-gsil-zhing /
'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis chos-la-brten / [13]
'bru-bzhi sbas-nas thugs-kar bkan /
tām-bsgreng rtse-mor dril-gsil 'bar /
nyi-ma 'bru-lnga las-su 'khril /
btud-de 'dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis-blta / [14]

Commentary:

[The seals of the male & female Amoghasiddhi (comment on Ch. 8.13-14):]

One is visualised as (Amoghasiddhi). There are four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) concealed (sbas-nas) within his right hand, which cohere (bkan) behind the little finger at his heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of his (rtse-mor) raised (bsgreng) little finger with the syllable HĀ (HĀ-bsgreng) there is visualised a sword (ral-gri) blazing ('bar) from the HĀ, and held at the heartcentre. Meanwhile, the syllables of his left hand are restrained on their lunar disks (zla-brtul). These five seed-syllables ('bru) are concealed (sbas) within it while they ring the bell (dril-gsil) and (zhing) with an embrace ('khril-pa'i tshul-gyis) of his female consort (Samayatārā), place the bell at her left thigh and thus support it on "reality" (chos-la brten).

Again, (as for the female consort Samayatārā), four seed-syllables ('bru-bzhi) are concealed (sbas) within her left hand and (nas) cohere (bkan) behind the little finger at her heart (thugs-kar). On the tip of her (rtse-mor) raised (bsgreng) little finger with the syllable TĀM, a ringing bell blazes forth (dril-gsil 'bar) from the TĀM, and is held at the heart-centre. Meanwhile, on the solar disks (nyi-ma) of her right hand the five seed-syllables ('bru-lnga) are drawn into (an "indestructible fist") and then, placed on the right thigh of her male consort, they embrace "activity" (las-su 'khril). And bowing (btud-de) towards the male consort, she looks on with a smiling demeanour ('dzum-pa'i mdangs-kyis blta).

[Secondly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female bodhisattvas. (This comments on Ch. 8.15):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.15]

Then there are the symbolic hand-emblems.
Which begin with the night lotus and the orange tree—
Namely, the shoot of gems, the blazing sword.
The white lotus, the blazing vajra,
The doctrinal wheel, and the corn-ear of gems.
And there are the beauteous form, the garland of gems,
The lute and the supreme dancing gesture.
The flower-garland, the supreme incense,
The butter-lamp, the scented oil and so forth.
(The female Bodhisattvas) embrace "activity"
And (the male Bodhisattvas) support (a bell) on "reality".
Their heads are tilted and bowed.
As in the case of the aforementioned great seal.
They embrace in the disposition of the non-dual expanse. [15] ...

[Tibetan]

ut-pal klu-shing la-sogs mtshan /
rin-chen myu-gu ral-gri 'bar /
padma dkar-po rdo-rje 'bar /
chos-kyi 'khor-lo rin-chen snye /
gzugs-mdzes rin-chen phreng-ba-dang /
pi-vang gar-mkhan mchog-nyid-de /
me-tog 'phreng-dang spos-mchog-ma /
mar-me byug-pa la-sogs-pa'i /
las-la 'khril-zhing chos-la-brtan /
dbu-rnams 'byo-zhing 'dud-pa'i tshul /
gong-gi phyag-rgya chen-po-bzhin /
gnyis-med dbyings-kyi ngang-du 'khril / [15]

Commentary:

[Secondly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female bodhisattvas. (This comments on Ch. 8.15):]

These are similar to the aforementioned (seals of the conquerors). in particular, the male consorts hold the symbolic hand-emblems which emerge from their respective seed-syllables at the heart-centre in their right hands, and the female consorts hold theirs at the heart-centre in their left hands. The left hands of the male consorts in addition support (a bell) on the left thigh of the female consort, which represents reality; and the right hand of the female consort should embrace the right thigh of the male consort (representing activity).

Then there are the symbolic hand-emblems of the male consorts, i.e. the symbolic hand-emblems (mtshan) which begin with (la-sogs) the night lotus (utpala) that emerges from the syllable MŪM (of Mañjuśrī) and the orange tree (klu-shing) that emerges from the syllable MAI (of Maitreya). These are namely, the shoot of gems (rin-chen myu-gu) which emerges

from the syllable KṢIṂ (of Kṣitigarbha), the blazing sword (ral-gri 'bar) of light which emerges from the syllable TRĀṂ (of Ākāśagarbha), the white lotus (padma dkar-po) which emerges from the syllable HRĪḤ (of Avalokiteśvara), the blazing vajra (rdo-rje 'bar) which emerges from the syllable JIṂ (of Vajrapāṇi), the doctrinal wheel (chos-kyi 'khor-lo) which emerges from the syllable THLIṂ (of Nivāraṇaviṣkambhin), and the corner of gems (rin-chen snye-ma) which emerges from the syllable HŪṂ (of Samantabhadra).

Then, there are the symbolic hand-emblems of the female consorts, namely, the mirror illustrative of beauteous form (gzugs-mdzes) which emerges from the syllable HŪṂ (of Lāsyā), the garland of gems (rin-chen 'phreng-ba) which emerges from the syllable TRĀṂ (of Mālyā), the lute (pi-yang) which emerges from the syllable HRĪḤ (of Gītā), and the supreme dancing gesture (gar-mkhan mchog-nyid-de) which emerges from the syllable ĀḤ (of Nartī). This is indicated by the three-pronged vajra which she carries above her head in a dancing movement. Also included among these are the flower garland (me-tog 'phreng) which emerges from the syllable HŪṂ (of Puṣpā), the censer of supreme incense (dang spos-mchod-ma) which emerges from the syllable JAḤ (of Dhūpā),^[1] the butterlamp (mar-me) which emerges from the syllable VAṂ (of Ālokā), and the doctrinal conch with its scented oil and so forth (byug-pa) which emerges from the syllable HOḤ (of Gandhā).

In the case of the female consorts, the right hand of the female consort embraces ('khril) the right thigh of the male consort which represents "activity" (las-la), and (zhing) in the case of the male consorts, the left hand supports (a bell) on (la-brten) or clasps the left thigh of the female consort, representing "reality" (chos). The heads (dbu-rnams) of the male consorts are slightly tilted ('byo) towards their female consorts, and (zhing) the female consorts are bowed ('dud-pa'i tshul) in the presence of their male consorts. As in the case of the aforementioned great seal (gong-gi phyag-rgya chen-po bzhin), the male & female consorts embrace in the disposition of (-kyi ngang-du 'khril) the expanse (dbyings) of reality, the nature of supreme bliss without conceptual elaboration, which is non-dual (gnysis-med) in terms of skillful means and discriminative awareness.

[Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female gatekeepers. (This comments on Ch. 8.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, p. 212, note 34, where the reading spos-mchog-ma is also given.

Text 8.16 (Commentary)

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The seals or hand-emblems of the wrathful deities
At the four gates are respectively
The cudgel surmounted by human skulls which is brandished.
The vajra which subjugates,
The skull with large snakes which subjugates,
The crossed-vajra which subjugates through activity.
The iron hook, the lasso, the iron chain, and the bell.
Abiding at the four gates,
These (deities) bow and embrace in the previous manner. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

sgo-bzhi'i khro-bo'i phyag-rgya-ni /
nr-mgo gdengs-dang rdo-rje gnon /
thod-sbrul chen-po gnon-pa-dang /
rdo-rje rgya-gram las-kyis gnon /
lcags-kyu zhags-pa spho-ṭa ho /
sgo-bzhir gnas-pa de-dag kyang /
'dud-tshul 'khril-ba gong-ma-bzhin / [16]

Commentary:

[Thirdly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female gatekeepers. (This comments on Ch. 8.16):]

Among the eight male & female wrathful deities (khro-bo) at the four gates (sgo-bzhi'i) of the maṇḍala, the seals or hand-emblems of (-i phyag-rgya-ni) the four male consorts are as follows: The cudgel surmounted by human skulls which is brandished (nri-mgo gdengs), the five-pronged vajra (rdo-rje) which subjugates (gnon), the skull with large snakes (thod-sbrul chen-po) which subjugates (gnon-pa-dang) by ensnarement, and the crossed vajra which subjugates through activity (rdo-rje rgya-gram las-kyi gnon) emerge from the respective syllables HŪṢ (of Yamāntaka, Mahābala, Hayagrīva, and Amṛtakuṇḍalin). While the four (gatekeepers) raise these emblems with their right hands, and clasp their respective female consorts with their left hands, their index fingers are poised in the gesture of menace.[1]

The seals of the female consorts, emerging from the four syllables PHAṬ (of Aṅkuṣā, Pāṣā, Sphoṭā, and Gaṇṭhā), are respectively the iron hook (lcags-kyu), the lasso (zhags-pa), the iron chain (lcags-sgrogs / sphoṭa), and the bell (ho / dril-bu). These are grasped with their left hands, while their right hands, clenched in an "indestructible fist", clasp their male consorts.

These (de-dag) male & female gatekeepers, abiding at the four gates (sgo-bzhir gnas-pa) are such that the female consorts bow ('dud-tshul) to their male consorts, and the male consorts are slightly tilting towards their female consorts. So the male & female consorts embrace ('khril-ba) in a disposition of non-dual reality, in the manner (bzhin) previously (gong-

ma) revealed.

[Fourthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the six sages (which comment on Ch. 8.17):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"gesture of menace" (sdigs-mdzub-kyi tshul). On the application of this gesture, see also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. pp. 290-300.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.17]

The six sages have diverse seals.

When subsumed, they number six seals.

Their female consort is the non-referential expanse of reality. [17] ...

[Tibetan]

thub-drug phyag-rgya sna-tshogs-te /
mdor-bsdus phyag-rgya drug yin-no /
yum-ni dmigs-med chos-kyi dbyings / [17]

Commentary:

[Fourthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the six sages (which comment on Ch. 8.17):]

By the power of those to be trained, the six sages (thub-drug) have diverse (sna-tshogs-te) seals (phyag-rgya). Although they are without specific definition, number and extent, when subsumed (mdor-bsdus) according to their respective classes (of living beings), they number six seals (phyag-rgya drug yin-no). What, one might ask, are these?

According to the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) they are as follows:[1]

They should be known as the seals or hand-emblems

Of the lute, the armour, the begging bowl.

The casket, the book and the fire & water.

Emerging from their respective seed-syllables (OM), these seals or hand-emblems are maintained at the heart-centres (of the respective sages). One might think, by the way, that because the sages have no female consorts they conform to the path in which skillful means and

discriminative awareness are not coalesced. In that case, it is true that they lack a female consort who appears as a referential object, but they are revealed to have the non-referential expanse as their female consort. Therefore, their female consort (yum-ni) is the expanse of reality (chos-kyi dbyings), non-referential (dmigs-med) in all respects and free from extremes of conceptual elaboration. There are some who hold that on the left side of the six sages there are six Samantabhadris, but that would contradict the precise number of deities (i.e. forty-two). There are also those who say their (consorts) are combined in Samantabhadrī, but that is incorrect because during meditation one would confuse the visualised deities and their correct number.

Again, there are some who hold that the six sages have no female consort, saying:

In order to benefit eternalistic extremists
The Buddhas' queen is most secret.

The latter observation, however, refers to the circumstances of the Yogatantras, and in this context (of Unsurpassed Yogatantra) it is not relevant. Although the sage of the human beings (Śākyamuni) did renounce the attributes of desire, he did not say that other (buddhas) should renounce them because emanational buddha-bodies appear to each in accord with his or her needs. Therefore, the actual absence of a female consort depends on (the 12 type of) emanation and the number of deities (in the maṇḍala).

[Fifthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra (which comment on Ch. 8.18):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Śatakratu holds the lute, Vemacitra bears the armour, Śākyamuni holds the begging bowl, Sthirasīmha holds the book, Jvālamukha holds the casket, and Yama holds the fire & water.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.18]

Samantabhadra is meditatively equipoised.
His pristine cognitions diffused.
The one who is his female consort
Is perfect in sameness.
And seated in the lotus posture. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

kun-bzang mnyam-gzhag ye-shes 'phro/
yum-'gyur mnyam-rdzogs padma'i dkyil / [18]

Commentary:

[Fifthly, there are the seals or hand-emblems of the male & female consorts Samantabhadra (which comment on Ch. 8.18):]

The two hands of Samantabhadra (kun-bzang) are meditatively equipoised (mnyam-bzhag). From his palms he displays the basis that arises as the glow (of the maṇḍala) so that his five pristine cognitions (ye-shes) become diffused ('phro) throughout the ten directions as light-rays of five distinctly radiant colours. Meanwhile, his feet assume the posture of Indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i skyil-krung). The seal or gesture of the one who is his female consort (yum-'gyur), Samantabhadri, is perfect in sameness (mnyam-rdzogs) like that of the male consort; and her two feet are seated in the lotus posture (padma'i dkyil).

[Now, all of these (different seals or hand-emblems) are shown to be reduced in number as follows. (This comments on Ch. 8.19):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.19]

There are, moreover, diverse modes of seal or hand-emblem—
Alternatively, the very (seals should be applied)
Of their (respective) Tathāgatas,
Or the gesture of the "indestructible palms". [19] ...

[Tibetan]

gzhan-yang phyag-rgya sna-tshogs-te /
yang-na de-bzhin gshegs-nyid-dam /
yang-na rdo-rje thal-mo-nyid / [19]

Commentary:

[Now, all of these (different seals or hand-emblems) are shown to be reduced in number as follows. (This comments on Ch. 8.19):]

Apart from these different seals which have been revealed, there are moreover (gzhan-yang) diverse modes of seal or hand-emblem (phyag-rgya sna-tshogs-te). When each enlightened family is attained individually, these deities may be depicted with an identical hand-emblem which is

symbolic of that particular enlightened family, such as the vajra. Alternatively (yane-na). either the very (nyid) seals of their five (respective) Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) should be applied, as indicated 13 above, or (dam yang-na) else the simple folding gesture of (nyid) the "indestructible palms" (rdo-rje thal-mo). There are some who teach that these three steps indicate that the male & female consorts Samantabhadra have diverse seals.[1]

This is the point in the following passage from the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The male & female Samantabhadra, sky-like in colour,
Have diverse and indefinite seals.
In addition to their meditative equipoise
And diffusion of pristine cognition.
They are depicted with the vajra and bell.

This passage however concerns the context in which the central deity is arrayed with the body-colour and symbolic hand-emblems of Samantabhadra; and it is said that the seals of the male & female Samantabhadra through whom the glow arises (gdangs-'char-ba'i kun-bzang yab-yum) are exclusively those of meditative equipoise, because they do not lapse into partiality.

[Synopsis of the Mandala of Seals according to the Resultant Supreme Pristine Cognition (288.4-294.5):]

The third part (of the detailed exegesis of the nature of the maṇḍala of seals—see p. 718) is a synopsis of the seals according to the resultant pristine cognition. It is threefold, comprising a general teaching on the natural seal of the abiding nature, a detailed exegesis on the seals which provisionally appear, and action on behalf of living beings through the seal which is the conclusive result.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 8.20):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, p. 234. On the distinction that is drawn here between Samantabhadra the central deity and Samantabhadra through whom the glow arises, see above. Ch. 6, pp. 645-649.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.20]

If the supreme provision of the great seal
Is encountered by one of skillful means and discriminative awareness.
There is neither stirring nor movement.
All things in their entirety
Abide in the disposition of the great seal. [20] ...

[Tibetan]

phyag-rgya chen-po'i tshogs-mchog-ni /
thabs-dang shes-rab-ldan 'byor-na /
ma-bskyod ma-bsgul thams-cad kun /
phyag-rgya chen-po'i ngang-du gnas / [20]

Commentary:

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 8.20):][1]

The essence of originally pure mind-as-such is the disposition of the treat seal (phyag-rgya chen-po'i), a genuine presence whereby all accumulated ideas that arise primordially abide as the supreme provision (tshogs-mchog-ni) of pristine cognition. If (na). realised through the kindness of the guru, this (great seal) is encountered ('byor) by the mind of one who simultaneously has (ldan) the objective attributes of apparitional skillful means (thabs-dang) and the naturally liberated awareness where discriminative awareness (shes-rab) arises without grasping, there is neither stirring (ma-bskyod) of the body nor movement (ma-bsgul) of the limbs. Indeed, all (kun) six classes of living beings and paths of conduct in their entirety (thams-cad) abide (gnas) and are gathered in the disposition of the great seal (phyag-rgya chen-po'i ngang-du), so that no artificial seals are applied.

[ii. The second (the detailed exegesis of the seals which provisionally appear) has four sections, the first of which concerns the emanation of the maṇḍala of the forty-two buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8.21):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This section, as stated above, p. 662, is known as the appendix of buddha-mind in four pādas.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.21]

The limbs (of the central deity)

Are endowed with the forty-two (deities). [21] ...

[Tibetan]

yan-lag bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis ldan / [21]

Commentary:

[ii. The second (the detailed exegesis of the seals which provisionally appear) has four sections, the first of which concerns the emanation of the maṇḍala of the forty-two buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8.21):]

The energy of this (maṇḍala) is Increasingly acquired by experiencing the contemplation in which the hand-emblems are emanated in the above manner. in this way, the limbs (yan-lag) of the body (of the central deity) are endowed (ldan) with the forty-two (bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis) deities and the benefit of realisation then emerges.[1]

Now, when oneself is visualised as the male & female Vairocana, the five male consorts—Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi, are located respectively in the crown, throat, heart, navel and secret centres of the male consort. The four spiritual warriors of buddha-mind—Kṣitigarbha, Vajrapāṇi, Akāśagarbha, and Avalokiteśvara, are respectively the right eye, ear, nostril and side of the tongue; and similarly the four corresponding organs on the left side are the four spiritual warriors of buddha-speech—Maitreya, Nivāraṇaṣṭakambhin, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī. His right hand is (Yamāntaka) the liberator of Yama; and his left hand is (Mahābala) the liberator of discriminative awareness. His left foot is (Hayagrīva) the liberator of the lotus, and his right foot is (Amṛtakuṇḍalin) the liberator of impediments. These are the four male gatekeepers. The six sages are respectively the crown, throat, heart, navel, secret centres and the soles of the feet. Thus, there are twenty-three deities (within the body of Vairocana).

Meanwhile, the five female consorts—Buddhalocanā, Paṇḍaravāsini, Dhātviśvarī, Māmakī, and Samayatārā—are located respectively in the crown, throat, heart, navel and secret centre of the female consort (Dhātviśvarī). The four female deities of the sense-objects—Lāsyā, Mālyā, Gītā, and Nartī—are respectively her left eye, ear, nostril, and side of the tongue; and similarly the four corresponding organs of the right side are the four female deities of time, namely Dhūpā, Puṣpā, Alokā, and Gandhā. Her left hand is Aṅkuṣā, and her right hand is Pāśā; while her right foot is Sphoṭā and her left Gaṇṭhā. These are the four female gatekeepers. Thus, there are seventeen deities within the female consort (Dhātviśvarī).

Combined together, these forty are the so-called deities of skillful means because they coarsely and outwardly abide. With the addition of the two basic deities, the male & female (Vairocana), there are altogether forty-two deities refined (on this path). The number of male and female consorts is unequal because the sages have no female consorts; and the male & female Samantabhadra are (in this context) subsumed within the nature of the basic deities.

[Once this excellent visualisation has become radiant, there follows the second section concerning the emanation of the maṇḍala of the thousand buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8.22):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, p. 237, who interprets this passage with the words: *yan-lag-gi lha bzhi-bcu tham-pa rtsa-lha gnyis-la bkod-pa'i thabs-lha bzhi-bcu*. This straightforward reading enables him to avoid kLong-chen-pa's explanation, p. 739. that the two basic deities are subsequently excluded from the calculation.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.22]

These themselves emanate limbs.

And the forty-two then become diffused threefold. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nyid yan-lag spros-bdag-ste /
bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis gsum 'phror-'gyur / [22]

Commentary:

[Once this excellent visualisation has become radiant, there follows the second section concerning the emanation of the maṇḍala of the thousand buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8.22):]

In the heart-centres of these (de-nyid) forty (deities), there abide corresponding beings of pristine cognition (*jñānasattva*) similar to (the deities) in appearance. The latter are called the deities of discriminative awareness, forty in number, because they abide subtly and internally as limbs (*yan-lag*) which (the deities) themselves (*bdag-ste*) emanate (*spros*).

Although the forty-two (*bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis*) deities of skillful means are mentioned (at this point in the text), they number forty with the exclusion of the two basic deities, the male & female (*Vairocana*).[1]

These (forty) then become ('gyur) one hundred and twenty when diffused ('phro) in a threefold (gsum) manner, as the deities who are blessed respectively by buddha-body, speech and mind. Each of these also has the five deities as their crown ornament, making six hundred. There are also another three hundred and sixty because those deities who are blessed by buddha-body, speech and mind are themselves threefold. With

the addition of the forty deities of discriminative awareness, there is therefore a maṇḍala of one thousand buddhas refined (on this path).

Now, in the opinion of some, there are forty deities of skillful means, forty deities of discriminative awareness, forty deities of buddha-body, forty deities of buddha-speech, and forty deities of buddha-mind, i.e. two hundred, each of which has the five crown ornaments, so that there is said to be a maṇḍala of a thousand (buddhas). The point is Identical.[2]

[When these (deities) have been excellently visualised, there is the third section concerning the radiance of the maṇḍala of the 21,000 buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8.23):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See previous note.

[2]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit.. pp. 236-7. effectively holds this position.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.23]

(Illustrated) by the supreme central deity

Who is endowed in this way.

The conquerors and the supreme conqueror

Are similarly endowed.

As are the twelve (surrounding pairs of Bodhisattvas).

And the six (sages) who have a diffusion of blazing light. [23] ...

[Tibetan]

de-ltar ldan-pa'i gtso-mchog-gis /
rgyal-ba rgyal-mchog de-bzhin-du /
bcu-gnyis drug-gi 'od-phror 'bar / [23]

Commentary:

[When these (deities) have been excellently visualised, there is the third section concerning the radiance of the maṇḍala of the 21,000 buddhas. (It comments on Ch. 8.23):]

Illustrated by (gis) the supreme central deity (gtso-mchog), the male & female Vairocana, who is endowed in this way (de-ltar ldan-pa'i) with the

thousand Buddhas, the four (other) enlightened families of conquerors (rgyal-ba) and Samantabhadra the supreme conqueror (rgyal-mchog) are also estimated to be similarly endowed (de-bzhin-du), so that each has a thousand (buddhas), making six thousand. Also endowed in the same way as these are the twelve (bcu-gnyis) (surrounding pairs), namely, the eight pairs of male & female spiritual warriors, and the four pairs of male & female gatekeepers—twelve thousand in number. The six (drug) who have a diffusion of biasing light (-gi 'od 'phro-'bar) are the six sages, who have no female consorts. The maṇḍala to be refined (on this path) altogether has an enumeration of twenty-one-thousand three-hundred-and-twelve (deities). Those who hold it to comprise twenty-four thousand (deities) conceitedly attribute female consorts to the six sages.[1]

[Once this (maṇḍala) has been experienced, there is the fourth section concerning the refinement of the maṇḍala of inconceivable Buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8.24):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., p. 238, while agreeing that the sages have no consorts, holds that they still number twenty-four thousand because he includes a retinue of inner & outer male & female bodhisattvas associated with their energy channels, alongside the standard enumeration of twenty-three male and seventeen female deities in the limbs.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.24]

Including these, (the maṇḍala) is inconceivable. [24]

[Tibetan]

de-la-sogs-te bsam-mi-khyab / [24]

Commentary:

[Once this (maṇḍala) has been experienced, there is the fourth section concerning the refinement of the maṇḍala of inconceivable Buddhas (which comments on Ch. 8.24):]

When each Buddha, including these (de-la sogs-te) forms, is in turn visualised as twenty-one thousand Buddhas, the maṇḍala (of deities) which is to be refined is inconceivable (bsam-mi-khyab).

Now, the bLa-ma Rong-zom-pa comments (on this same passage) as

follows: A single buddha-body of the deity (such as Vairocana), is endowed with forty-two limbs, and each of these also is endowed with three deities blessed respectively by buddha-body, speech and mind. So it is that these themselves are the emanated limbs (yan-lag spros-pa dag-ste). The forty-two (deities) become diffused in a threefold manner. Also, he explains that the twelve (surrounding pairs) and the six (sages) have a diffusion of blazing light because the deities who are the limbs are also estimated to have the same (number of Internal deities) as the central deity himself, so that in each one-hundred-and-twenty (deities) emerge.[1]

These apparitional deities are established as the result through the previous experience of yoga, and they are also established as the path because they are the causal basis for attaining power over the lifespan during the performance of feast-offering ceremonies.[2]

[iii. The third concerns actions on behalf of living beings through the conclusive seals. It has five parts, the first of which reveals their diversity for the sake of those to be trained. (It comments on Ch. 8.25):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This is an obscure passage, even within the extant oral exegetical tradition of the Guhyagarbha. It appears to indicate, however, that in Rong-zom-pa's view, the verse: bcu-gnyis drug-gi 'od 'phro-'bar is combined with the previous section on the threefold diffusion of the forty-two deities, rather than on the maṇḍala of 21,000 buddhas.

[2]:

On the attainment of power over the lifespan (tshe-dbang). see below. Ch. 9, PP. 810-811, Ch. 12, pp. 959-974.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.25]

In the unthinkable ten directions and four times

The purposes of training are differently revealed. [25] ...

[Tibetan]

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi bsam-yas-su /
'dul-ba'i don-rnams so-sor ston / [25]

Commentary:

[iii. The third concerns actions on behalf of living beings through the conclusive seals. It has five parts, the first of which reveals their diversity for the sake of those to be trained. (It comments on Ch. 8.25):]

When conclusive Buddha-hood has been attained through meditation in that manner during the circumstances of the path, in the unthinkable (bsam-yas-su) Buddha-fields subsumed within the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi) the purposes of (-i don-rnams) the seals which bring about the training ('dul-ba) of Inestimable trainees are differently revealed (so-sor ston) by the buddha-body, acting on behalf of living beings in the form of buddha, universal monarch, and so forth, corresponding to the perception of the different sentient beings.

[The second concerns the appearances which accord with this teaching. (It comments on Ch. 8.26):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.26]

As all the vehicles—high and low,
As the erroneous and unthinkably (numerous beings).
And as all great assemblies of peaceful & wrathful deities.
They are everywhere perceived, differently
And corresponding (to volition). [26] ...

[Tibetan]

theg-pa mtho-dman thams-cad-dang /
phyin-ci-log-rnams bsam-yas-dang /
zhi-khro'i tshogs-chen thams-cad-la /
so-sor mthun-byas kun-tu snang / [26]

Commentary:

[The second concerns the appearances which accord with this teaching. (It comments on Ch. 8.26):]

As all (thams-cad) the vehicles (theg-pa)—Including the high (mtho) ones, from mantra to transcendental perfection, and the low (dman) ones of the pious attendants and self-centred buddhas, and (dang) as the eternalistic extremists with their erroneous (phyin-ci-log-rnams) view and conduct and the unthinkable (bsam-yas) numerous ordinary beings; and (dang) as all the great assemblies (tshogs-chen thams-cad-la) including those of deities who are peaceful (zhi) for the sake of trainees and wrathful deities (khro'i) such as Mara and Yama, they appear differently (so-sor). training each according to his or her needs, and they are everywhere perceived (kun-tu snang), corresponding (mthun-byas) to volition.

[The third Illustrates that although they diversely appear they do not deviate from a unitary state. (It comments on Ch. 8.27):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.27]

As, for example, in the case of a dancer,
This diverse (movement) is revealed
But not depicted in Isolation
From the body (of pristine cognition). [27] ...

[Tibetan]

dper-na gar-mkhan-nyid 'dra-ba /
lus-las ma-bkod sna-tshogs-ston / [27]

Commentary:

[The third Illustrates that although they diversely appear they do not deviate from a unitary state. (It comments on Ch. 8.27):]

As in the case ('dra-ba) for example (dper-na) of a single theatrical dancer (gar-mkhan-nyid) whose right leg is extended and left leg is drawn in, and who appears as the manifold peaceful and wrathful deities, this diverse (sna-tshogs) movement of the peaceful and wrathful deities and so forth is indeed revealed (ston) spontaneously and through spirituality which corresponds to the perception of living beings; but it is not (ma) purposefully depicted (bkod) or specifically referred to in isolation from (las) the unique nature of the primordially pure body (lus) of pristine cognition.

[The fourth teaches that on account of those to be trained, the seals are indefinite in number. (It comments on Ch. 8.28):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.28]

In brief, all seals or hand-emblems

Cannot be described as "this" or as "merely one".

But they are emanated twice and thrice.

This movement & emanation are indeed the real nature. [28] ...

[Tibetan]

mdor-na phyag-rgya thams-cad-ni /

'di-zhes gcig-ces brjod-du-med /

gnyis-dang gsum-du rnam-par 'phro /

bskyod-dang spro-ba'ang de-bzhin-nyid / [28]

Commentary:

[The fourth teaches that on account of those to be trained, the seals are indefinite in number. (It comments on Ch. 8.28):]

In brief (mdor-na), all seals or hand-emblems (phyag-rgya thams-cad-ni) including those of supreme enlightenment and those which discipline Māra, cannot be described (brjod-du med) exclusively as "this" ('di-zhes) finite category or as "merely one", (gcig-ces), but they are multiplied twice (gnyis) through the power of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and thrice (dang-gsum-du) through the buddha-body, speech and mind. They are moreover emanated (rnam-par 'phro) as the four rites of enlightened activity and so forth because this movement (bskyod) of the body and (dang) all emanation (spro-ba) of its limbs as seals or hand-emblems are indeed ('ang) present as the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) of the deities' seals.

[The fifth is the gathering of all (movements) in the great seal of the abiding nature (which comments on Ch. 8.29):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 8.29]

In brief, all movement and stirring in their entirety

Abide in the disposition of the great seal,
But their abiding nature does not abide.
Indeed there is no such abiding at all.
—Such was explained by the pure supreme one himself. [29] ...

[Tibetan]

mdor-na bsgul-bskyod thams-cad kun /
phyag-rgya chen-po'i ngang-du gnas /
gnas-nyid mi-gnas gnas-pa'ang min /
de-skad-dag mchog-nyid-kyis bshad / [29]

Commentary:

[The fifth is the gathering of all (movements) in the great seal of the abiding nature (which comments on Ch. 8.29):]

In brief (mdor-na), all (thams-cad) movement (bskyod) of the limbs and stirring (bsgul) of the body in their entirety (kun) abide in the disposition of the great seal (phyag-rgya chen-po'i ngang-du gnas): but the abiding nature (gnas-nyid) of all is the reality of primordial Buddha-hood which does not (mi) itself abide (gnas) even minutely as impure (gestures of) sealing or phenomena. Indeed there is no such abiding at all (gnas-pa'ang min). Rather, one's body abides as the seal or maṇḍala of the deity, one's speech as that of mantra, and one's mind as that of reality.

Such (de-skad) verses as these were explained (bshad) by Samantabhadra himself (nyid-kyis), the supreme one (mchog) in whom the two obscurations are without exception pure (dag), the Buddha endowed with the excellence of fine learning.

This indeed is a ground for conviction, as is said in the Sūtra Requested by Jñānottara (T. 82):

This is because one whose defects have ceased Has no reason to tell lies.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 8.30):]

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[Guhya garbha-Tantra, Text section 8.30]

This completes the eighth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to The Real, entitled the Consecration of All Limbs as the Maṇḍala and the Subsequent Emanation of the Seals or Hand-Emblems. [30]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las yan-lag thams-cad
dkyil-'khor-du byin-gyis brlabs-nas phyag-rgya spros-pa'i le'u-ste brgyad-
pa'o / [30]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 8.30):]

This completes (-o) the exegesis of the eighth chapter (le'u ste brgyad-
pa) from the (las) most Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) that is the
seal of pristine cognition. Definitive With Respect to The Real (de-kho-na-
nyid nges-pa) abiding nature of reality, entitled (-i) the Consecration
(byin-gyis brlabs) of All (thams-cad) Limbs (yan-lag) of the body and
thought as (du) the primordially pure Maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) and the
Subsequent (nas) Emanation (spros-pa) of the natural Seals or Hand-
emblems (phyag-rgya).

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Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the array of the secret commitments of indestructible reality, and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

In the palms of the great seal.

The most subtle and supreme commitment [2]

Is the genuine maṇḍala of buddha-mind.

It should be four inches (sor-mo) in its dimension. [3]

Endowed with five seeds, five scents, five gems.

Five essences, five medicines, and five nectars,

It is exceedingly level.

And its lines should be pitched with awareness. [4]

It should have a four-spoked circle and perimeter

Endowed with a central axis and radial lines.

And a courtyard with four corners,

A quadrangle, and embrasured gates. [5]

On disks of sun and moon, the size of a round fingernail,
On a lotus seat, the size of a chick-pea.
There is the syllable, the size of a mustard seed.
And derived therefrom the (symbolic) seal is drawn.
The size of a sesame seed. [6]

Surrounded by diverse kinds of manufactured cotton.
And by ornaments, earlands, potables, and savouries.
Offerings are excellently made with provisions—
A cloud-mass of songs, verses, dancing.
Gesticulations, and musical trappings.
The female consorts, the female gatekeepers.
And the female spiritual warriors
Make worthy offerings, just as they are desired. [7]

The fire which has become a mouth.
Endowed with characteristics of shape and colour.
Is summoned forth into (the hearth)
And offerings of the four rites are excellently presented
With provisions of food, drink, and savouries. [8]

This is similar for the maṇḍala of wrathful deities.
One who has refined the subtlest (contemplation)
Should indeed act in the same manner
In the case of the unthinkable (maṇḍalas),
Insofar as they have been estimated by awareness. [9]

The great seal through which offerings are made
Comprises the Buddha-fields of all ten directions
With their provisions, which form a wish-fulfilling
Cloud-mass of the mind—
There is the ground composed of diverse gemstones
Which is pliant, soft and pleasant to touch.
Beautifully designed and bedecked.
It blazes forth as a mass of precious things
Which are the origin of all.
There are shapely pools, most delicious to taste and cool.
Diverse mansions of gemstones.
Ornaments, groves of wish-granting trees.
Melodious songs, the sound of poetic verses.
Canopies, victory-banners, robes, parasols.
Long pendants, shoulder-ornaments, half-pendants.
Diverse [/ supreme] kinds of food and drink.
And there are male and female deities.
Themselves ornamented beautifully and
Numerous as atomic particles.
Who fill the space of the ten directions
With their unthinkable dancing, gesticulations and so on,
And then make offerings extensively to all maṇḍalas. [10]

According to distinctions in the clarity of fortunate ones,
One is either gradually or immediately
Equiposed in the expanse of reality. [11]

And one should meditate on the great seal
Through which these offerings are made. [12]

When she (the karmamudrā) has radiance or is consecrated.
In the manner of the trichiliochosm absorbed in a mustard seed.
Offerings are made after inviting the maṇḍalas from the expanse.
And the supreme commitment of accomplishment
(Is obtained) once they have been pleased. [13]

Through offerings of the Great Identity
All maṇḍalas of the buddhas without exception are pleased.
All living beings within the three realms of existence
Are filled with supreme delight. [14]

Through stability in the Magical Net
All maṇḍalas of the buddhas without exception.
Which emerge in the ten directions and four times.
And (the beings of pristine cognition) become manifest
To living beings of the three world-systems. [15]

Body, speech, mind, and all phenomena
Do not abide in any respect, and are non-referential.
Like an optical illusion, through this union.
Meditate on the space within space. [16]

Having performed all these, the mighty lord
Should enter with awareness.
Then the student should be ushered in. [17]

Then this supreme son of the enlightened family
Offers the kingdom and his own body.
His children, wife, and riches.
Which are most dear and pleasant to his mind. [18]

If offerings of the five raptures are made to the mighty lord.
Offerings are made to all maṇḍalas.
It goes without saying that (offerings are made)
To the maṇḍala which is at hand?
All defects are purified. [19]

If the ascetic discipline of faith and perseverance is well understood.
The empowerments of beneficence are given,
And the empowerments of ability
Should be given sequentially,
And received with compassion.
Such that they are not unproductive. [20]

Alternatively, with palms joined together,
And in the lap of the great seal.
One who is learned should confer (empowerment) in the maṇḍala
Which is a full finger-span in dimension,
In accordance with the ritual. [21]

Alternatively, on a most level site
The maṇḍala should be a full cubit in dimension,
Or a full body-length in dimension,
Or three body lengths in dimension.
With kilas, threads, colour powders.
And a pleasant assistant.
Beautified with robes and ornaments.
The excellent ritual in which the lines are pitched
Should be performed by the great learned one.
Twisting (the threads) together. [22]

Alternatively, It should be sixteen, and twenty
Or twenty-five cubits in dimension.
One meditates on the five maṇḍalas of enlightened families.
And the forms endowed with buddha-body, speech and mind are also
arrayed. [23]

Alternatively, it is one reach of hearing, one yojana.
Or an unthinkable expanse of space in its dimension.
Therein one meditates on the diverse maṇḍalas of the buddhas.
And, in order that they might be revealed
To deluded unseeing beings.
They should be drawn with coloured powders
Of twenty-five hues or of five hues.
These are to be painted according to the ritual
In which instruction is given. [24]

The supreme infinite display of contemplation
Is endowed with syllables, symbols, heart-mantras.
Seals, or the buddha-body, speech and mind.
Consecrated in that (maṇḍala).
There are amazing and wondrous accomplishments
Which are the commitment of all the Buddhas.
If the sequence of liberation will be obtained
Even when seals have been made from clay and so forth.
It goes without saying that (mind) will be purified
By pure pristine cognition. This itself is (Buddha-hood)! [25]

The Great Identity of the maṇḍalas
Of the directions and times
Invites all maṇḍalas from the maṇḍala
Of non-referential buddha-mind. [26]

Through meditative union, characteristic of entry
Into the self-manifesting indivisible maṇḍala.
The maṇḍala of ritual service is well perfected.
Emerging from all directions and times.
This is the supreme commitment of the closest ones. [27]

The wish-granting tree.
The wish-fulfilling gemstone,
And all things that emerge
Are not substantial.

But are the steadfast merit
Of one's own mind. [28]

This wondrous, marvellous, amazing reality
Does not extraneously exist and come forth.
But it emerges in those dispositions
Which have the nature of discriminative awareness.
Steadfast in skillful means.
The real nature of the expanse of discriminative awareness
Becomes the seals of skillful means.
Thus pristine cognition is displayed in pristine cognition
And the display of pristine cognition is itself gathered. [29]

The conquerors actually emerge and grant protection.
They confer blessing and also become visible
In the same (aforementioned) manner.
With charisma which can perform actions.
This indestructible reality of magical display
Is supreme among kings. [30]

Having perfected the five kinds of ritual.
If one perfectly endowed with the five requisites
And perfect in the five aspects of mantra
Perseveres to undertake (practice) without degeneration [31]
The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months.
Or in fourteen, or in sixteen.
Within sixteen lifespans (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five Buddha-bodies. [32]

In that nature, the seminal point of pristine cognition.
The appearance of the seminal point
Of pristine cognition itself is inconceivable,
Infinitely supreme, and manifestly perfect
Throughout the ten directions and four times. [33]

The Buddha-field, pure and unthinkable.
In which there is the celestial palace
Free from spatial dimensions.
With its ornamental (form) on the wheel.
And the assembly of its display.
Comprises all unthinkable maṇḍalas, without exception.
When it is seen, mastery is attained
And the benefit which emerges
From its vast buddha-speech
Is the harmonious pristine cognition,
Manifest in and of itself. [34]

The real nature which is free from
The single and the multiple,
And is without extremes or middle.
Is not seen even by the buddhas.
The naturally present pristine cognition

Appears without abiding. [35]

Purified of applied misconceptions.

That pristine cognition is not extraneous to the expanse.

As such, it makes connection through great spirituality.

Whereby it appears to the six classes of living beings

In all times and places without exception. [36]

If the faithful ones enter in the maṇḍala of supreme bliss,

Where the two spouses (are present), or when

The five (coloured maṇḍala) has been formed.

They will be equal to their desired and agreeable (accomplishment).

The pristine cognition equal to one's fortune

Will draw near if it is cultivated.

And its most amazing (accomplishment)

Is certain to emerge.

But if those lacking faith spoil it.

They will be lost.—

—Such was his meaningful expression. [37]

This completes the ninth chapter of the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled the Secret Commitment of the Indestructible Array. [38]

Introduction 1: Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes

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[Commentary (294.5-370.5):]

The third part (of the general teaching on the nature of the three maṇḍalas of buddha-body, speech and mind, see p. 543) concerns the maṇḍala of images which clarifies (the aforementioned maṇḍala of contemplation). It Includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview (294.6-332.2)]

The overview has three aspects, namely, a teaching on the drawing of the maṇḍala and its beneficial attributes; the visual creation of the deities and the making of offerings to them; and a teaching on empowerment and its result.

[Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes (295.1-304.2):]

The first of these has four subdivisions—the ritual associated with the site: the ritual associated with the coloured lines; the drawing (of the maṇḍala) and the arrangement of its ornaments; and a teaching on the preparation of the offerings and their beneficial attributes.

[1: The ritual associated with the site]

[2: The ritual associated with the Coloured Lines]

[3: The drawing of the Maṇḍala]

[4: The preparation of the Offerings]

Introduction 1.1: The Ritual associated with the site

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[Full title: Introduction (1): Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes—(A). The ritual associated with the site]

[This (the ritual associated with the site) has seven topics, among which the first is the inspection of a site or ground suitable for a level and pleasant maṇḍala.]

It says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (p. 4720, 70.5.3):[1]

The site should have many peaks.

Octagonal in shape and so forth.

And water which does not flow out

In the manner of a river.

It should also be level

And endowed with pleasant springs

Which pour from the mouths (of animal-shaped rocks).

Its characteristic atmosphere should be one

In which sunshine is known mostly to prevail.

The land to the west and north should be high and steeply inclined,

While that to the east and south should fall away and slope gently.

Inspect the site for high solitary peaks,

(Tear-shaped) rocks, exposed valleys

And rivers which do not converge.

These are hostile perimeters for the maṇḍala

And its empowerment (dal-dbang).

The site should be a forested mountain elevation,

Extremely level and verdant.

With rivers flowing from west to east.

Inspect its gentle breeze.

Its flower groves, and chirping birds.

One which has a known history is indeed said to be best.

Introspective and delightful.

It should be remote from the enemies of concentration,

Just like one's own home and so forth,

Because it has a persistent ability and strength.

Excavating a hole one full cubit wide by four cubits deep in such a location, one should remove the following impurities (op. cit., 70.5.6):

Bog, cinders, and charcoal.

Gravel, bones, and so forth.

The hole should be filled with water, and this water should then be inspected at the distance of one hundred paces (op. cit., 71.2.6-61.3.1):

Filled with water, it should be examined at one hundred paces.

The indications are best if the water has not decreased, mediocre if it has half decreased, and worst if it has entirely evaporated.

The second topic is the request for the site: The site should be requested for the maṇḍala from its human and non-human (owners), in accordance with the following words:[2]

One whose mind has abandoned avarice
Should make this request to its visible and invisible owners,
With payments and sincere persuasion
In order to pacify disputations.

Then, after earth-treasures of corn and gems have been concealed,[3] the ground should be levelled, sprinkled with drops of perfume, and the ritual of the goddess of the earth should be performed: The yogin must indeed conquer negativity in the manner of the Buddha who previously requested the site at Vajrāsana and conquered Māra at the time of attaining Buddha-hood.[4] The golden Goddess (of the earth) is visually created, holding a vase and riding on a pig.

Once she has been invited, offerings and eulogies are made to her, along with the words:

"Permit me, such and such a person of indestructible reality, to build a maṇḍala in the vicinity of this site!"

The third topic is the domination of the site: One must pacify impediments, visualising oneself as the red Kīlaya Heruka, and meditating that the site is filled with his rays of light.[5]

The fourth topic is the purification (of the site): At the outset, (the site) should be probed around (the abdomen of) the Lord of the Soil, the Serpent-Bellied Spirit (urāga / lto-'phyé).[6]

It should be probed in accordance with the following verses from the Commentary on the Eight volumes of Nectar (bam-brgyad-kyi 'grel-pa):

The characteristic way in which
The Serpent-Bellied Spirit abides is as follows:
(Moving clockwise) with the motion of the sun,
During the three autumn months
The spirit lies on his left side
With head facing east and his face to the south.
During the three winter months
His face is to the west and his head to the south.
During the three spring months

His face is to the north and his head to the west;
And during the three summer months
His face is to the east and his head to the north.
The Serpent-Bellied Spirit, lord of the soil, abides as such.
O Great One! Dig at the abdomen of the serpent (lto-'phye).

One should indeed dig at the abdomen. Otherwise, if the head (of the spirit) is struck, the master will die; and if the tail is struck the student will die.

Then one should examine the supporting base (of the site). The land around it should slope downwards to the north and east; it should be level in the other two directions, and slightly higher in the middle. That (middle area) should also be annointed with five dairy products, five kinds of grain and so forth.

The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) says:

Blending a solution of mineral deposits,[7]
Which are of five colours,
Apply it thoroughly in all directions
In the middle of the square,
And plaster (the site) two cubits across.

Then the site is also purified by fire:

If the indications are entirely negative,
One should proceed to another site
Or purify it well by fire which pacifies.

Then visualising oneself as the wrathful deity (Amṛtakunḍalin),[8] rays of light emerge from the palms of his hands, turning the area of the site into the nature of a five-pronged vajra. Impurity is refined, and one should then focus on emptiness.

The fifth topic is the consecration of the site: The master visually creates himself as the central deity, and conceives of manifold buddhas and bodhisattvas in that site, which is radiantly visualised as a celestial palace of deities. Then he exclaims:

Do not transgress any of the commands given by me, the Great Identity!

He proclaims the SUMBHANI oath (which removes impediments) and encircles the site with the motion of his vajra.[9]

The sixth topic is the guarding of the site: He meditates that from his own heart ten wrathful deities emerge to guard the site, blazing forth like a conflagration (at the end) of an aeon.[10]

The seventh topic is the seizing of the site: In order to pitch the lines (of the maṇḍala) or project its schematic points, (the master) visually creates the deity, makes some offerings and eulogies, and then visualises

that the deity dissolves to become the ground of the celestial palace of deities.[11] Through all these topics, the ritual associated with the site is completed.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This difficult and terse passage has been interpreted according to the oral exegesis of Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che.

[2]:

N. L.

[3]:

On the practice of concealing treasures to replace others extracted by gter-ston, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, *passim*; also T. Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*. p. 137. note 240.

[4]:

Cf. *Lalitavistara*. XXI; NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 23ff.; also see above. Ch. 3, pp. 480-482.

[5]:

Tibetan phur-pa dmar-po he-ru-ka.

[6]:

For an explanation of the Ito-'phye. "lord of the soil," which serves to clarify the following quotation, see T. L. Gyatsho, *Gateway to the Temple*, pp. 29-33; also F. Lessing & A. Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, pp. 280-281, note. An illustration from the former is reproduced in fig. 5, immediately above.

[7]:

Tibetan sa-zhag spos-chen rnam-nga.

[8]:

As explained by Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che, when Vairocana is at the centre, this wrathful deity is Amṛtakunḍalin.

[9]:

OM SUMBHANI SUMBHA HŪM HŪM PHAṬ OM GRHṆA GRHṆA HŪM HŪM PHAṬ OM GRHṆĀPAYĀ GRHṆĀPAYĀ HŪM HŪM PHAṬ OM ĀNAYA HOḤ BHAGAVAN VAJRA HŪM HŪM PHAṬ. See S. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*, p. 356. According to G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. I, p. 3, the deities Śumbha and Nisumbha are mentioned as chief of the vighna

(Tibetan bgegs) or obstaclecreating demons. On this class of deities, see also Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. p. 285.

[10]:

These ten wrathful deities (khro-bo bcu) are Hūṃkara, Vijaya, Nīladaṇḍa, Yamāntaka, Acala, Hayagrīva, Aparacitta, Amṛtakuṇḍalin, Trailokyayijaya, and Mahābala. They are the ten guardians of attainment, corresponding to the ten directions of the inner protective circle. See also below, pp. 800-801; and T. Skorupski, *The Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*. p. 313, note, where eight of them are enumerated.

[11]:

As indicated above. Ch. 7. pp. 689-690, the deities associated with the vimāna and its ground are Vairocana and Uṣṇīṣacakravartin.

Introduction 1.2: The Ritual associated with the Coloured Lines

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[Full title: Introduction (1): Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes—(B). The ritual associated with the coloured lines]

[The second subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the consecration of the coloured lines: Yarn of five or twenty-five colours is spun by a sixteen year old girl.]

As is said in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.2.1):

Coloured yarn prepared from lotus fibres

Should be excellently spun by a mudrā of sixteen years.

Each single yarn with its five strands

Should establish the nature of the pristine cognitions.

Nine yarns of three colours

Manufactured from cotton wool

Represent the Buddha-body, speech and mind.

These are excellently arrayed on a pure receptacle or site.

These strands of yarn and their coloured dyes are consecrated as the nature of the five pristine cognitions. At the outset, the spatial line of indestructible reality (rdo-rje gnam-thig) is grasped by a female assistant who is significantly able to duplicate the maṇḍala.[1]

She pitches it in accordance with the following words from the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

The female assistant who draws the lines

Is consecrated as one endowed with the signs

Of a spiritual warrior of activity.

With her hand-seal and gesticulation

She pitches the spatial line of the natural maṇḍala.
Then the terrestrial line is also pitched:
Distinguished by the acumen of those to be trained.
The dimensions of the maṇḍala are indefinite.
Beginning with a dimension of four inches.
It may reach as far as yojanas.

Tn this way, the dimensions (of the maṇḍala) are said to be between four inches and infinity.[2]

A consecration should also be performed: The coloured lines are visualised as the deities, after which offerings and eulogies are made to them. in this way (the lines) are transformed into pristine cognition.

The Sequence Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.3.4) says:

When the receptacle or site has been purified
In a distinct sequence,
Meditate that each single seed-syllable such as HŪM
Is represented by five (lines) with corresponding colours.
And that on transfiguration,
These become the deities with their twenty-five (colours).
Endowed with skillful means and discriminative awareness.
The five pristine cognitions indicative of
Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities
Of the ten directions and four times
Are absorbed therein.
Consequently these five transfigured material (lines)
Should be considered as a maṇḍala
Materialised from the causal basis of pristine cognition—
The buddha-body, speech, attributes, activities, and mind.

Moreover, when the seed-syllables are traced on coloured soil, they should be heaped up and then vanish into it (72.4.3):

The mantras and seals.
Which purify the coloured powders.
Are heaped up and act as if impregnating them.

Concerning the significance of the different colours discerned among the coloured powders, there is a passage from the Tantra of the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834) which says:

All sentient beings without exception
Are totally pervaded by the five pristine cognitions.
But they have been obscured by their own thoughts.
In order to reveal the character of pristine cognition
To all such deluded beings,
Who do not see the meaning of the five pristine cognitions,
The colours white, red, yellow and green
Are revealed, including black.[3]

As for the material substance of these coloured dyes, the best are

prepared from gemstones, as is said in the following passage from the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 72.3-3):

There are coloured dyes made from five kinds of gems:
These are prepared from sapphire, moonstone.
Topaz (puṣparāga), fine coral, and emerald (marakata).
Other (shades) are synthesised by combining them:
To represent the Bodhisattvas and wrathful deities
In each intermediate direction and so forth.
There are said to be twenty-five colours.

The mediocre and inferior kinds of material substance are those compounded from all sorts of coloured pigments.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"strand of yarn" (Tibetan snol-ma). Before the actual or terrestrial lines of the maṇḍala can be pitched, they are drawn in the space above the maṇḍala, and as such are known as the "spatial line of indestructible reality" (rdo-rje gnam-thig) or the "spatial line of pristine cognition" (ye-shes-kyi gnam-thig). See below, p. 764; also cf. F. Lessing and A. Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*. pp. 285-286, where the "line of pristine cognition" (ye-shes-kyi thig, Sanskrit jñānasūtra) is said to be pitched after the "line of action" (las-kyi thig, Sanskrit karmasūtra).

[2]:

As described below, pp. 812-834, the "four-inch maṇḍala" (sor-bzhi'i dkyil-'khor) refers essentially to the vaginamaṇḍala of the female consort, but it may also refer to a materially constructed maṇḍala on a base of ivory. On the dimensions of the largest maṇḍalas in terms of yojanas or infinity, see also below, pp. 838-839.

[3]:

As Indicated below, p. 766, black is painted on the inside. This is applicable in all traditions. Cf. F. Lessing & A Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, p. 286, note.

Introduction 1.3: The drawing of the Maṇḍala

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[Full title: Introduction (1): Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes—(C). The drawing (of the maṇḍala) and the arrangement of its ornaments]

[The third subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the drawing (of the maṇḍala) and the arrangement of its ornaments.]

This has two parts of which the former concerns the drawing of the lines: After the spatial line of pristine cognition (ye-shes-kyi gnam-thig) has been raised up, it is brought down (to earth) and then pitched.

The ritual for drawing (the lines) is then described in the following words (from the above text, 72-4.4):

When mighty ones endowed with appropriate implements
Pitch the lines (of the maṇḍala),
First the site is circumambulated from the north-east[1]
And then those of powerful presence should draw it.
Engaged in contemplation and the hand-seals
Of "indetructible palms" or "fist".
And endowed with their respective seed-syllables.

So it is in accordance with a lineage-holder who discerns the Brahma lines (tshangs-thig), the diagonal lines (zur-thig), and so forth, that (the lines) are pitched to represent the double gates and walls.[2]

There are also esoteric instructions which, to some extent, analyse (the drawing of these lines):[3]

(The lines of the maṇḍala) form sixteen large bands.
Among them are three interior bands
Which should be bisected, making six.
Among (these six), the first is divided in two.
And its outer half is further divided.
The second should be divided into four.
The third and fourth are left unmarked.
The fifth is marked by two outer lines,
But not in its middle section.
The sixth is divided in two.
And its outer half is further divided.
This all represents the inner gates.
The fourth large band represents the outer courtyard.
The fifth is marked by two outer lines,
But not in its middle section.
The sixth is divided in two.
And its outer half is further divided.
The seventh should be divided into four,
And the eighth is marked by two outer lines.
But not in its middle section.

The hole, marked by the Awesome Kila ('gying-phur), is filled with coloured powders representing the five pristine cognitions, and then the colours are gradually applied.[4]

It says accordingly in the Magical Net of Vairocana (NGB. Vol. 19, T. 466):

The coloured dyes should be applied from the inside.
The coloured dyes should not be applied from the outside.

Starting first from the north-east
The master himself should Initially apply the paint.
And then, as Indicated, the student should do so.

And in the Awakening of Vairocana (T. 494):

The coloured dyes should be applied from the inside.
They should not be applied from the outside.
White should initially be applied.
And subsequently red.
Then yellow should be applied.
And subsequently green is applied.
Inside all of these there is black.
The ritual associated with the coloured dyes
Is explained in that manner.

Now, in the case of a large (maṇḍala), at the central point in the middle of the area demarcated by the double gates and walls there is a four-spoked circle. in the middle of that and (on the four spokes), i.e. in five locations, there are four-spoked circles with their own perimeters. These (are painted) in order, corresponding to the colours of the deities. Then the areas covered by the four inner and outer rightangled corners are painted.

Thereafter, the five walls are successively coloured from the inside—blue, green, red, yellow, and white. in general, (maṇḍalas have) a wall with two layers, representing the layers of pristine cognition and buddha-body. in this (Secret Nucleus), however, the inner wall (of the maṇḍala) is the layer of pristine cognition and the outer wall is the layer of buddha-body. The latter is (coloured) from the Inside in the order of blue, white, yellow, red and green.

The courtyard is green, and the tiered pediments are ornately coloured, while appropriately ornate colours should also be applied to the other areas. There are some who hold that these (other areas) refer to the four spoked-circles at the base of the tiered pediments, but the majority hold them to indicate the four half-vajras (rdo-rje ra-ba) because (colours) are applied to them in harmony with those others. Whichever view is held, there is indeed no contradiction.[5]

(The maṇḍala) of intermediate dimension is similar to the one which immediately follows. The condensed (maṇḍala) is claimed to have four right-angled corners and embrasured gates without an inner courtyard.

Symbols are then arrayed in these locations of (the maṇḍala): In the case of a constructed (maṇḍala), they form an appropriate array of the Images of buddha-body, seed-syllables, and symbolic hand-emblems; and if unconstructed, one should just employ symbolism. Indicating the body-colours (of the deities) with heaps of coloured powders.

The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) says:

The central deity is perfectly drawn in form.

The retinues should be indicated by their hand-emblems.
And the ordinary (deities) by their seed-syllables.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"north-east" (Tibetan dbang-ldan phyogs).

[2]:

For an illustration of the Brahmā and diagonal lines, see D.L. Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*; also F. Lessing & A. Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*. p. 284, note. See also the drawing of the Guhyagarbha maṇḍala in fig. 6, immediately above, which is reproduced from Bhutanese archives and kindly provided by dKon-mchog bsTan-'dzin. Fig. 7 depicts the finished maṇḍala of the zhi-khro ngan-song sbyong-ba from the klong-chen snying-thig-gi gtor-ma'i dpe'u-ris.

[3]:

The description given in this passage corresponds for the most part to fig. 6. Note that each side of the square in the Illustration has eighteen rather than sixteen large bands (cha-chen), among which the verses omit the eighth on each side, renaming the ninth as the eighth.

[4]:

On the 'gying-phur which makes a cavity at the centre of the maṇḍala, see below, p. 837.

[5]:

The four half-vajras indicate the shape of the crossed-vajra (rdo-rje rgya-gram, Sanskrit viśvavajra) formed around the four tiered pediments.

Introduction 1.4: The preparation of the Offerings

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[Full title: Introduction (1): Drawing the Maṇḍala and its Beneficial Attributes—(D). A Teaching on the preparation of the Offerings and their Beneficial Attributes]

[The fourth subdivision (see p. 756) concerns the preparation of the offerings and a teaching on their beneficial attributes.]

This has three parts: The first is the preparation of the offerings, including outer and inner offerings, ornaments and clothing, cymbals and other such musical instruments. These should be adorned with an

abundance of edibles.

The second is the consecration (rab-gnas): The maṇḍala is visually created in an immediate manner and the being of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) penetrates it, whereupon one meditates on it as an image stabilised by the essential tokens or the three seed-syllables. The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) accordingly says:

Whatever object has been constructed, including maṇḍalas.
If it lacks consecration and pristine cognition.
Its provisions and drawings will be Impotent.

The third concerns the beneficial attributes: The merits of drawing such a maṇḍala of coloured powders are inestimable.

It says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rgyas-pa):

Those who draw the supreme maṇḍala of the conquerors
With lines and coloured dyes
Have an immeasurable mass of meritorious deeds,
Granting the seven precious things[1]
To all the Buddha-fields of the ten directions.
Their deeds will be accomplished,
And, intended by the conquerors.
They will obtain unthinkable maṇḍalas.

Also, in the White Lotus of the Genuine Doctrine (T. 113, Cf. Kern, p. 50):

Whoever construct a stūpa from stone,
Whoever construct a stūpa of aloes-wood, and sandalwood,
Or whoever construct one of medicinal wood,
And those who make one of wood or other materials.
And who build a joyous field of conquerors' stūpas
With clay, bricks and so forth.
And who similarly construct them from mounds of dust
In deserted wildernesses.
And those who construct stūpas dedicated to the conquerors
In a mound made of sand
During random childhood play.
And others, too, who commission representative images
Will all obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made images of the Sugatas
From the seven precious things
And those who have similarly made them
From copper and bell-metal.
All will obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made images of the Sugatas
From lead, iron or clay
Or have made them of mud, beautiful to behold.
Will all obtain enlightenment.
Those who have made line drawings of images
On the surfaces of walls

And the buddha-bodies complete with extensive merits and attributes.
Whether they have themselves drawn or commissioned them.
All will obtain enlightenment.
Those, old or young,
Who, during their studies
Or in play and in private
Have drawn images with fingernail or a piece of wood
All will obtain enlightenment.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The seven precious things or offerings (rin-cen bdun) are the precious wheel ('khor-lo rin-po-che), the precious jewel (nor-bu rin-po-che), the precious queen (btsun-mo rin-po-che), the precious minister (blon-po rin-po-che), the precious elephant (glang-po rin-po-che), the precious supreme horse (rta-mchog rin-po-che), and the precious general (dmag-dpon rin-po-che).

Introduction 2.1: The Creation and Visualisation of the Deities

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The second section of the overview (see p. 756) includes both the creation and visualisation of the deities, and the making of offerings to them.

[As to the former: When the boundaries of this location and the commitments associated with it have been established, one should sit there in a comfortable posture.]

Initially, one should cultivate an enlightened attitude with the verses which begin (Ch. 2.6):

Emaho? This wondrous marvellous reality
Is the secret of all perfect Buddhas.
All is created through the uncreated.
At creation itself there is no creation.

One should then meditate on the three kinds of contemplation from within this disposition that is without conceptual elaboration In all respects.[1] Uttering the words (Ch. 9.16):

Body, speech, mind and all phenomena
Do not abide in any respect, and are non-referential.
As an optical illusion, through this union.
Meditate on the space within space.

One should meditate from the disposition or contemplation of the real, which is non-referential in all respects, upon that contemplation in which great compassion universally appears for the sake of all sentient beings.

Then, from that disposition, one meditates on the contemplation of the causal basis which is expressed in the following words (Ch. 5.2):

Mind-as-such without basis
Is the basis of all things.
Mind-as-such is the nature of the syllables.
The syllables are a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gems.

One recites the syllable A, and thereupon, from a disposition in which the nature of mind radiates as the white syllable A, one utters the following words (Ch. 4.2):

AḤ The steadfast white syllable A
Emanates tiny syllables A
Which radiate and fill the ten directions.
It (re-)absorbs them, and yet remains constant.
Without Increase or decrease.

In this way, there naturally emanate from the syllable A in the middle of a lunar disk, which itself derives from the syllable A, the vocalic seed-syllables representing the major marks (of the buddha-body) and the consonantal seed-syllables representing the minor marks. Surrounding it in two rows, these essential syllables from A to KṢA melt into light and are thence transformed into a vajra marked with the syllable HŪṂ. That too is transfigured and one meditates that from it there emerges the body of dark-blue Samantabhadra, the natural ground, seated in the posture of indestructible reality and blazing forth a mass of light-rays which pervade the expanse of space.

Now, (the contemplations) concerning the real nature and (great compassion) which universally appears refer to the identity of the pristine cognition of emptiness and the enlightened family of the Tathāgata. The solar and lunar disks refer to the mirror-like pristine cognition and the enlightened family of indestructible reality. The mass of light refers to the pristine cognition of sameness and the enlightened family of gemstones. The vajra marked with the syllable HŪṂ refers to the pristine cognition of discernment and the enlightened family of the lotus. The buddha-body (of Samantabhadra) refers to the pristine cognition of accomplishment and to the enlightened family of activity. This is indeed a complete meditation on all realities of the Buddha-level.

Then, with the words (Ch. 7.2):

BHRUṂ VIŚVAVIŚUDDHE

There emerges the great celestial palace which is located on the Immeasurable ground, the circle of pristine cognition. It is endowed with four gates, four sides, and four tiered-pediments. Upon its five walls there are cornices of gemstones, pendant with necklaces and half-necklaces of precious gems. Adorned with battlements and corbelled brackets (pu-shu). its bulbous and symmetrical vase-shape fills the expanse of space. Outside and Inside it is pure, radiating the light of pristine cognition. It has both outer and inner gateways, and (above them) a dense cloud-mass of

parasols, victory-banners and musical instruments; while a cloud-mass of offerings is gathered by inestimable goddesses endowed with desired attributes.

Thus the celestial palace is most radiantly created with the following verses (Ch. 6.2-5) from:

Pristine cognition is considered
In terms of the four directions and centre,

Down to:

With (their cushions of) sun, moon, lotus and gems.

Then, on one's left, one visually creates the dark-blue female consort Samantabhadri, similar to her male consort (Samantabhadra), with the following words (Ch. 4, 16 & 23):

The syllable A is the uncreated real nature.
KṢA is the spirituality of pristine cognition, the buddha-mind.

Then one utters the verses (Ch. 4.27):

This wheel is a joyous cloud of
Skillful means and discriminative awareness.
It is the causal basis of the provision of enlightened mind.
Its result is the maturation and accomplishment of the conquerors.
These wondrous forty-two consonantal syllables.
Not compounded by nature,
Are the compounded indestructible reality
Which discloses the maṇḍalas.
Their commitment to do so is not transgressed—
Dependent are they on the great force
Of their accumulated causes and conditions. Aho?

Thereupon, the male and female consorts (Samantabhadra) embrace indivisibly, and from their heart-centre a cloud of syllables emanates. It is visualised that these turn into the maṇḍala of deities, accomplishing the deeds of the Buddhas, and are then reabsorbed in the maṇḍala.

Then one utters the verses (Ch. 4.17-24) from:

ṬHA is the indestructible reality of magical emanation,

Down to:

AU is the destructor of all.

Thereupon, the male & female Vairocana dissolve into the male & female Samantabhadra, and the other deities are visualised to be present within their respective (peripheral) abodes. Then, the Samantabhadra of awareness comes forth alone from the heart of the central deity, standing upright with his ankles touching and palms folded together, and with the

ornaments of a spiritual warrior.[2]

Circumambulating the deities of the maṇḍala three times, he scatters flowers from the western gate and utters the verses:[3]

OM The great past commitment of Buddha-mind
Unites all world-systems without exception
In the fields of the conquerors.
Thereby, may I unite with the great seal!

The deities grant their consent and emanate light-rays of skillful means and discriminative awareness towards oneself. The thoughts of one's mind and the body and speech derived therefrom are purified and transformed into a single mass of light which is naturally free from the subject-object dichotomy. The light rays of the body, speech and mind of those deities are emanated in the form of the syllables OM, ĀḤ, HŪM, which penetrate and vanish

into that mass of light. Consequently it becomes the syllable HŪM, a nature in which buddha-body, speech and mind are indivisible. It is then visualised to vanish into the heart of the central deity so that the body of the central deity becomes brilliant. Then it becomes the “seminal enlightened mind” (bodhicitta) of the male & female central deities without duality, and abides in the secret centre of the female consort. All the deities dissolve into this “seminal enlightened mind”, along with the sounds of their respective secret mantras. Then, in the middle of the maṇḍala on a lion (throne) with sun and moon (cushions) one visualises the nature of the “seminal enlightened mind” in which all these are unified as a mere orb of light. It yet again turns into the syllables HŪM and MŪM, and through the emanation & absorption of light-rays these turn into a vajra and bell. It is through the transfiguration (of these hand-emblems) that the bodies of the male & female Vairocana are (finally) visualised.

Then beginning with the verses (Ch. 7.14):

OM MAHĀŚŪNYATĀJÑĀNAVAJRASVABHĀVĀTMAKO/HAM

The empowerments of the five pristine cognitions and the conferral of blessing through the fivefold buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities are performed.

Then, when the secret centres of the male and female consorts have been consecrated respectively as a vajra and a lotus, their union is symbolically indicated by the words (Ch. 7.11):

SAMAYA HOḤ

And they become meditatively equipoised without duality.[4]

The “seminal enlightened mind” of the male consort is diffused into the secret centre of the female consort, thereby consecrating that secret centre as the celestial palace. Within it, the heartmantras of the deities, i.e. their different seed-syllables such as HŪM and OM, are radiantly visualised, and

these are transformed into the bodies of the different deities simply by reciting the secret mantras of the different deities. Then, just by reciting the syllable JAḤ, they immediately come forth from the secret centre of the female consort into the space before one, and are visualised to be present in their respective locations (of the maṇḍala), their body, speech and mind blessed by the syllables OM, AḤ and HŪM and accomplishing the deeds of the buddhas through the emanation & absorption of their rays of light. The mantras of the different deities which have previously been revealed are then recited and visually created: The male & female consorts Samantabhadra are visualised in the heart-centre of the central deity, and the six sages should be seated in the outer courtyard. The others are (to be visualised) in the aforementioned manner. Such is the visual creation of the maṇḍala.

Then (the being of pristine cognition) is invited with the following verses (Ch. 9.26-27):

The great identity of the maṇḍalas
Of the directions and times
Invites all maṇḍalas from the maṇḍala
Of non-referential Buddha-mind.
Through meditative union, characteristic of entry
Into the self-manifesting indivisible maṇḍala.
The maṇḍala of ritual service is well-perfected,
Emerging from all directions and times.
This is the supreme commitment of the closest ones.

And (Ch. 7, 9):

OM EHYEHI BHAGAVĀN MAHĀKARUṆIKA DRṢYA HOḤ
SAMAYASTVAṂ JAḤ HŪM VAṂ HOḤ.

In this way, the great maṇḍala arrives from Akaniṣṭha in the space before one, just as it has been visually created. Offerings are then made mentally to it.

The (offering) flowers of one's awareness are scattered with the following words (Ch. 7.10):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM
AḤ VAJRA SAMAYA AḤ
HŪM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪM
SVĀ VAJRA SAMAYA SVĀ
HĀ VAJRA SAMAYA HĀ.

Consequently, the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of the natural maṇḍala and the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of contemplation should be realised to be indivisible in nature. This is because all that emanates from mind is primordially pure. This is known indeed as the scattering of the (offering) flowers of one's awareness. It is also called the “seal indicative of undifferentiated awareness”, and the “entrance into the self-manifesting maṇḍala”.[5]

Then, in order that the bodies of the deities might be indivisibly dissolved therein, one utters the verses (Ch. 7.11):

OM King of pristine cognition!
Equipoised now in the most wondrous Buddha-body.
Speech, mind, attributes and activities,
May I unite with the great seal!

In this way, the deities approach to confer their accomplishments, and with the words (Ch. 7.11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HŪṂ

The being of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) dissolves indivisibly into the being of commitment (samayasattva), just as water is poured into water.

Then with the words (Ch. 7.11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM

Oneself is visualised to be established in the maṇḍala of deities until Buddha-hood has been obtained.

With the words (Ch. 7.11):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA HOḤ

This visualisation becomes powerful and Joyful; and with the words:

JAḤ HŪṂ VAṂ HOḤ

It becomes firm, radiant, and then extremely radiant. Then, the deities are radiantly visualised with the following verses (Ch. 6.6-11):

On these seats, in the posture of the perfect (Buddhas)
And the posture of the spiritual warriors.

Down to:

(Pervasive without extremes or centre)
Is this unthinkable, spontaneously present maṇḍala.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These are the three contemplations according to Mahāyoga, viz. the contemplation of reality or emptiness (de-kho-na-nyid-kyi ting-nge-'dzin), the contemplation of universal appearance or compassion (kun-tu snang-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin), and the contemplation of the causal basis, i.e. the seed-syllables of buddha-speech from which the seals emanate (rgyu'i ting-nge-'dzin). See also above, p. 679. and below, p. 851.

[2]:

Cf. above, p. 646, note 17. and p. 647. where the author considers the mistaken view of others who would hold this presence of Samantabhadra casting flowers or lots on the periphery of the maṇḍala to be kun-tu bzang-po byed-pa-po. rather than rig-pa'i kun-tu bzang-po.

[3]:

N.L., but cf. Ch. 7. section 11.

[4]:

On the maṇḍalas associated with the sexual or secret centres of the male & female consorts, see below, pp. 812835

[5]:

"the scattering of the (offering) flowers of one's awareness" (rig-pa'i me-tog dor-ba), "seal indicative of undifferentiated awareness" (so-so ma-yin-pa'i rig-pa 'dun-pa'i phyag), and "entrance into the self-manifesting maṇḍala" (rang-snang-gi dkyil-'khor-du 'jug-pa'i tshul).

Introduction 2.2: Making of offerings to the Maṇḍala

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[This part (see p. 771) concerns the making of offerings to (the maṇḍala).]

It has three sections among which the first concerns the common offerings: According to the traditions of the outer mantras oneself is present in the maṇḍala of deities as a spiritual warrior of activity, emerging from the heart-centre of the central deity. The acts which one should then perform include prostrations, offerings, eulogies, confession, the receiving of accomplishments, and prayers of aspiration. One should know that these are also the indivisible essence because they are simply a display of mind.[1]

The second concerns the uncommon offerings: In the manner of the gods of Nirmāṇarata who enjoy rapture of their own emanation,[2] goddesses endowed with desired attributes issue forth from the heart-centres of the deities and are visualised making offerings to them. All the ten directions are visualised as pure Buddha-fields and the inconceivable offering-cloud of Samantabhadra is emanated—a great uninterrupted and spontaneous offering of all excellent desires including: clouds of songs, verses, and music which are displayed with ornaments of great rapture. The offerings should be made in the manner of deities at play with deities.

The third concerns the unsurpassed offerings, including in this context:

the presentation of the non-dual offerings associated with the paths of sexual union and “liberation”, the offering of nectar which is a sacrament of the commitments, the offerings in sons of the seals of pristine cognition, and the offerings in praise of the Great Joyous One (Samantabhadra), which are mentioned above and below.[3]

In particular, after the nectar (has been offered), a maṇḍala is visually created, the size of a mustard seed, in a lotus-courtyard symbolic of sexual union with the female consort, actual or imaginary, who possesses the (appropriate) marks.[4] Then the maṇḍala equal to the confines of space is invited from Akaniṣṭha and it dissolves therein. An offering should then be made through the bliss of the display (of “seminal enlightened mind”). This is the sacrament of offering which is offered with supreme bliss to its object, i.e. the supreme bliss of the buddhas. in this way, the resultant pristine cognition or supreme bliss which is the Intention of the buddhas is actualised from the present moment, making this therefore supreme among all the provisions of merit and pristine cognition.[5]

Then, there is the sequence of recitation: Light, emanating from the syllables in the heart-centres of the deities, makes contact with the Infinite sentient beings of celestial expanse, in such a way that it is visualised to purify all their obscurations and so forth through the succession of the four rites. The sentient beings should recite the mantras of these different deities, transforming themselves into the syllables and vanishing into the heart-centres (of the deities) until they have received an injunction from the central deity.

Alternatively, the garland of mantras thoroughly permeates the bodily form of the different deities and from their secret centres it emits supremely blissful enveloping rays of light, which make contact with sentient beings in such a way that obscurations are purified. (Sentient beings) should persevere in one-pointed recitation of the mantra of the basic deity and the seed-syllables alone of the retinue, transforming themselves into the nature of the deities and reabsorbing themselves in the heart-centre.

No precise number (of recitations) has been specified in this context, but it is held that recitation should continue until one becomes accomplished. in general it is claimed that ritual service should be performed with a number (of recitations) which amounts to ten million for the central deity and ten thousand for each of the retinue. Therefore one should also follow that custom in (the practice of) this (Secret Nucleus).[6]

Now in order not to transgress the maṇḍala of deities, one should visualise it at all times during and after sessions of meditation. During this disposition, one should be meditatively equipoised, recollecting the meaning of the four seals and the abiding nature of the natural Great Perfection. Then, after dedicating the merit for the sake of sentient beings one should arise (from that session) and freely perform activities on the path of conduct, with the volition that all phenomenal existence becomes the deities, celestial palace and Buddha-field.[7]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As indicated above, p. 775, this is held to be the dharmakāya, in the form of rig-pa'i kun-tu bzang-po.

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On Nirmāṇarata (Tibetan 'phrul-dga'), which is the penultimate realm among the ten realms of kāmādhātu. see NSTB, Book 1, chart.

[3]:

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[4]:

On these appropriate marks of a female consort, see below. Ch. 11, pp. 900-907.

[5]:

On puṇvasambhāra and jñānasambhāra, see above p. 468.

[6]:

See above. Ch. 5, p. 619. The difference in number of recitations could be explained by the distinction between "ritual service" (sevā) and signs of accomplishment derived from the complete rites of attainment (sādhana). See also below. Ch. 11, pp. 946-948, on the appropriate times and dates for these rites.

[7]:

The distinctions between and integration of meditative equipoise (mnyam-gzhag) and its aftermath (rjes-thob) are discussed in works such as O-rgyan dPal-sprul 'Jigs-med Chos-kyi dBang-po, tshig-gsum gnad-du brdeg-pa.

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(A). A teaching on the Burnt Offerings which form the common Preliminary Practice]

The third aspect (of the overview—see p. 756) is a teaching on empowerment and its result. It has three sections, namely: a teaching on the burnt offerings which form the common preliminary practice: the entry and empowerment of the student (in the maṇḍala): and a teaching on the result achieved through meditation on the creation and perfection stages.

Concerning the burnt offerings, it says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 74.2.4):

There are said to be four kinds of burnt offering—[1]

Each of them concerns the site,

The two participants in the consecration.

And the actual time for the conferral of bliss.

Thus, during the rites associated with the site there is pacification of negative signs, enrichment or increase in the lifespan of the one who consecrates the maṇḍala, subjugation or power over the lifespan of the one who is empowered: and during the preparation of the student there is wrathful subjugation of bad dreams which arise.[2]

For the rite of pacification, the hearth (thab-khung) is white and round. If it is constructed with walls, it should have a one cubit deep railing in three tiers which are marked respectively (with the motifs) of wheel, half-vajra, and a white lasso with four darts. If it is drawn, it has the form of an eight-spoked wheel, the extremities of which are marked with the syllables OM, the motif of a lion-headed capital (seng-mgo spel-ma), and a white lasso with four darts.[3]

For the rite of enrichment, the hearth is square and yellow. If it is constructed with walls, they form a one cubit deep square in three tiers, the innermost one of which has (the motif of) a chest of sems, the middle one a vajra, and the outermost one is encircled by a yellow lasso. If it is drawn, it has the form of an octagonal semstone, the tip of which is marked with gemstones.[4]

For the rite of subjugation, the hearth is semi-circular and red. If it is drawn, it has the form of an eight-petalled lotus. If it is constructed with walls, they are square and red, with (the motif of) four darts.[5]

For the rite of wrath, the hearth is triangular and black, if it is drawn, it has the form of the gaping jaws of a wrathful deity. If it is constructed with walls, it has (the motif of) four darts surrounded by a black lasso.[6]

The firewood is piled up corresponding in colour and shape to the different (kinds of hearth). For the rite of pacification the burnt sacraments

are the three white things (i.e. curd, milk, and butter), sesame oil and edibles which are white in colour. For the rite of enrichment the sacraments are the three sweet things (i.e. molasses, honey and sugar), curds and various kinds of yellow grain. For the rite of subjugation the sacraments are sour things, flowers and various kinds of food and drink which are red in colour. For the rite of wrath the sacraments are pungent things, poisons, blood, and various effigies (liṅga) which are black in colour.[7]

Then, once the hearth and the sacraments of the burnt offering have been purified with incense-smoke, one visually creates in the midst of the fire-light of pristine cognition, endowed with the colour of the rite, the syllables OM, TRĀM, HRĪH, and ĀH.[8] Therefrom emerges Agni, the fire-god of the rite which is being performed, upon a goat (ra-skyes) and holding rosary-beads, a chest, a lasso, and a trident, while his left hand carries a ladle (kuṇḍa). He is endowed with the colours of the respective (rites).

Then he is invited with the following words:[9]

HŪM By virtue of my faith and commitment
I beseech you, great elemental,
To come here. Come here!
May the god of fire, supreme sase and brahman,
Come to this very place!
OM AGNAYE EHYEHI SAMAYA JAḤ JAḤ.

Then with the words:

JAḤ HŪM VAḤ HOḤ

(The fire-god) vanishes into the (hearth). A welcoming meal (byon-zan) is presented to him with seven ladles of molten butter, and then offerings and eulogies are made. Once the burnt sacraments have been offered and praises made seven times with the mantras of the fire-sod, then, during both the rites of pacification and enrichment, the peaceful deities are invited into the stomach of the fire-sod; while during the rites of subjugation and wrath the wrathful deities are invited. This invitation may be visually created or not. When these deities are present (in the hearth), they are each given seven ladles-full of the welcoming meal, after which offerings and eulogies are made. Then, once the burnt sacraments including the firewood have been offered in conjunction with the root mantras of the different (deities), (diagrams) of the mantras for the respective (rites)—ŚĀNTIM, PUṢṬIM, VAŚAM KURUYE SVĀHĀ, and MĀRAYA PHAṬ—are attached (to the fire) and offered (through recitation) one hundred, or one thousand times and so forth.[10] Then, praying for one's desired purpose, one implores (the deities) to come forth. The other deities common to this enlightened family are radiantly visualised, along with country divinities, the lords of the locality, and the fire-god himself, and all that one possesses is offered to them. Having assigned them their enlightened activities, one should pray for forbearance and (complete the rite) from the departure (of Agni) down to the benediction. Thereby, the rites are accomplished and obstacles are pacified.[11]

[1]:

Viz. pacification (zhi-ba, Sanskrit śāntikrama), enrichment (rgyas-pa, Sanskrit puṣṭikrama), subjugation (dbang, Sanskrit vaśyakrama), and wrath (drag, Sanskrit abhicārakrama). See also below. pp. 1258-1264; T. Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites;" and S. Beyer, The Cult of Tārā, pp. 264-278.

[2]:

On the inspection of dreams within the preparatory stage of an empowerment ceremony, see also The Dalai Lama & J. Hopkins, The Kalachakra Tantra, pp. 201-208.

[3]:

Cf. the slightly different description of the rite of pacification, which accords with the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra. in T. Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites," pp. 407-409. Note that the illustrative diagrams therein do not exactly correspond to the present description of these rites. For an illustration of the three-tiered railing (kha-khyer bang-rim gsum-pa). see D. Snellgrove, The Nine Ways of Bon. The "four darts" (mda'-bzhi) are represented by the form of a half-moon with a vajra-handle.

[4]:

Cf. T. Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites," pp. 409-411 and illustrative diagram.

[5]:

Cf. T. Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites," pp. 410-411, and the illustrative diagram.

[6]:

Cf. T. Skorupski, "Tibetan Homa Rites," pp. 411-412.

[7]:

On the composition of these effigies and other sacraments, see also below, pp. 1258-1264.

[8]:

i.e. OM for pacification, TRĀṂ for enrichment, HRĪḤ for subjugation, and AḤ for wrath.

[9]:

N.L., but cf. S. Beyer, op. cit., p. 268.

[10]:

Lit. "Pacify! Increase! (or Enrich!) Subjugate! and Kill!" The respective root mantras are those specified above, p. 785.

[11]:

On these concluding ceremonies, see S. Beyer, op. cit.. p. 274.

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(B). The Entry and Empowerment of the Student (in the maṇḍala)]

[This section] has three parts, namely: the preparatory ritual for the student's entry; the sequence of the actual foundation of empowerment; and the beneficial attributes which have been proclaimed along with the rites which conclude the feast (offerings).

[1: The preparatory ritual for the student's entry]

[2: The Sequence of the actual Foundation of Empowerment]

[3: The Beneficial Attributes which have been Proclaimed]

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(B). The Entry and Empowerment of the Student (in the maṇḍala)—(1): The preparatory ritual for the student's entry]

Concerning the first of these, it says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720, 74.2.6):

The entrance of the mighty lord into the maṇḍala,
His prayer for forbearance,
The ablution, covering, and scent.
The offering of the body, and expulsion of impediments.
The consecration (of the master) as the deity.
The granting of commitments, their appraisal,
And the bestowal of the water (of commitment),
The proclamation (concerning commitments).
The casting of one's offering gems.
The descent of the deity, the earnest entreaty.

The opening of the eyes.
The excellent revelation of the maṇḍala,
And the provisions which are offered and presented—
These are the eighteen aspects (of the entrance).

Thus, there is one factor associated with the entrance of the master, and seventeen associated with the entrance of the student. As to the former: The master of indestructible reality (vajrācārya), clad in his red robe, stands at the eastern gate of the maṇḍala.

He holds a flower and recites the mantras (Ch. 7.10):

OM VAJRA SAMAYA OM

Thereby, he visualises that the deities of the maṇḍala are indivisible from the Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Then, after reciting the verses (Ch. 7.11) which begin:

OM King of pristine cognition...

He summons forth accomplishment with mantras such as:

OM VAJRA SAMAYASTVAM

And visualises that he and the maṇḍala are present without differentiation. That is a somewhat brief explanation. When this entrance is elaborately made, (the master) enters in the manner of a student and receives the empowerment.

Then, when the students outside the maṇḍala have washed with scented water, their faces are covered with a red blindfold (mig-dar) made of cotton and so forth, and flowers are placed within their palms, folded together.

Inside (the maṇḍala), the master folds his hands together and utters the following words (Sequence of Indestructible Activity, 74.3.3):

I intentionally pray that my students
May be permitted to enter this maṇḍala—
The palace or nucleus of all the Tathāgatas
Through which the pristine cognition
Of indestructible reality is obtained.

In this way, all the Tathāgatas rejoice, and it is visualised that the students obtain permission to enter.

Then the master of ceremonies (karmācārya) leads the disciples, their eyes covered with a blindfold, into the presence of the guru, through a door which is not adjacent to the maṇḍala, and where they make the following request to the guru (Māyājālābhīṣekavaśyaka, P. 4721, 78.4.6):

I bow before you, the central deity, Vajrasattva.
I desire the great path to liberation.

I seek refuge in this empowerment, its commitments.
Its nātha protectors, and its viras or warriors.
As I enter into the mansion of the greater vehicle.
Bestow the pristine cognition of excellent knowledge on me!

The Guru then asks:

Disciple, in what do you say you delight?

To which the students reply:

I delight in my good fortune.

The Guru then speaks (the following words from the
Māyājālābhiṣekavaśyaka, P. 4721, 78.4.7):

My child? Come hither!
Attend to the ritual conduct which is pleasant,
And grasp the indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind.
In order to abide non-referentially
In the supreme bliss of perfect pristine cognition,
Practice liberality with a confident mind
Which has abandoned avarice.
And firmly grasp the mind itself.
I grant the perfect empowerment, of the Magical Net?

Then the master of ceremonies presses half of a vajra into their hands.
The students grasp it and are led into the presence of the maṇḍala where
they make obeisance, and offer their bodies with as the mantra:

OM SARVABUDDHA PŪJOPASTHĀNĀYA ĀTMĀNAṀ NIRYĀTAYĀMI.

The guru then expels impediments with the crossed-vajra and so forth,
while he visualises the five fingers of his (right and left) hands as the male
and female consorts of the five enlightened families respectively, and
makes a solemn declaration of truth. From the points of contact made by
pressing the fingers together light-rays of “seminal enlightened mind” are
emanated, which sever the obscurations of the disciples, causing them to
melt into light, and then to abide in the manner of mercury. Through the
three kinds of (contemplative) ritual the students are equipped and
protected for the visualisation of Vairocana.

Then, again, they make the following requests:[1]

In the manner of the offerings made to the Buddhas
By the indestructible enlightened mind...

And the words which begin:

Glorious holder of the body of Indestructible reality...

Afterwards the guru, with the words KĀYA SIDDHI OM and so forth,
inserts the three seed-syllables in their three centres, and these then are

emanated and absorbed.

Uttering the words:

SARVATATHĀGATA KĀYA SIDDHI OM̐

And so forth, he confers the commitments of Buddha-body, speech and mind.

He also presses a vajra to the hearts of the disciples and appraises them of the commitments with the following words (Sequence of Indestructible Activity. P. 4720, 74.4.1):

This secret of all the Buddhas
Should never be divulged
To those tainted by violation of commitments.
Do not scorn or despise me,
The one who reveals the greater vehicle.
Abide constantly in Buddha-body, speech and mind.
And act on behalf of sentient beings without exception.

Then, he pours out the water of commitment with the words (op. cit., 74.4.5):

This is water of hell for you.
If you transgress the commitments
It will burn.[2]
Turning into a great wrathful deity of indestructible reality,
Drink this water of indestructible reality?
OM̐ VAJRA YAKṢA HŪM̐.

Then again, he should bestow the offering-water with the words (op. cit., 74.4.4):

So it is, my son.
That you should guard the commitments.
If you guard the commitments, accomplishment will come.
Drink therefore this water
Which is nectar of indestructible reality?
OM̐ VAJRA UDAKATHAḤ HŪM̐.

Then he proclaims his understanding of the commitments that are obtained with the words (op. cit., 74.4.5):

Through mind-as-such endowed
With skillful means and discriminative awareness
One should never harbour doubts.
But experience the five desired attributes.[3]

Then the students cast their diadems or flowers (of offering), and these adhere to the particular deities (of the maṇḍala) with whom they are connected through (past) deeds.

At that time, they speak as follows:[4]

May the garland of gems, flower, and so forth
Fall upon that deity whose pristine cognition
I performed ritual service for in past lives.
And whose intention is to receive me with spirituality.
OM PRATĪCCHA VAJRA HOḤ.

Then, picking up their flowers, they place them on the crown of the head and respectively invite on to the crowns of their heads the particular deities on whom their flowers have landed, saying:

EHYEHI.

The deities dissolve therein through the mantras JAḤ HUM VAM HOḤ, and a declaration of truth is made. Subsequently the students call their particular deities by name, making them sit in front of their hearts. Saying:

May I therefore achieve excellent accomplishment!

It is then visualised that the breast of each student is opened by the mantra PRAVEŚA, and that the deity and student become indivisible through the mantra ĀVEŚA.

Then, corresponding to the enlightened family of the deity on whom one's flower has landed, one is given a secret name, such as Vajrāja (King of Indestructible Reality), and one should apply oneself to the meditation and recitation (of mantras) connected with that deity.

The covering over the face is then removed with the words:[5]

Today, by dint of faith,
Behold the genuine maṇḍala.
Take birth in the enlightened family of Buddha-speech.
And resort to supreme accomplishment.
VAJRA CAKṢUḤ PRAVEŚA PHAṬ.

On opening the eyes the darkness of ignorance is removed, and one should have the volition to see the maṇḍala of pristine cognition. Then the symbolic meanings of the maṇḍala are revealed in the words (op. cit., 74.5.2) which begin:

The light rays which dissolve all things
In the non-dual expanse are radiant.
Devoid of unity and all conceptual elaborations,
They form a circular maṇḍala, without conceptual elaboration.

And the real natures of the respective deities are revealed with the words (74.5.5):

Because everything is naturally pure.
The forty-two deities of the Magical Net
Constantly comprise all things in their divine nature.

Everything without exception forms the supreme maṇḍala.
One should know well this characteristic nature.

Then all offerings that one possesses are actually presented, or if one has none, they are promised and mentally offered.

The offerings are pledged with the following words:[6]

HOḤ I pray intentionally
To the Identity of great pristine cognition
And its secret maṇḍala which do not abide.[7]
In the presence of such and such.
Who is a holder of indestructible reality.
And my guru or great mighty lord of yoga,
I have purified the buddha-mind in reality,
Subtlest of all the atoms of aeons and fields.
Thus I am present at this time as a master
Of the great secret maṇḍala. HOḤ!
When an empowerment such as this profound Magical Net,
Most uncommon of all transmitted precepts, is requested.
May I be the one to give it
With an Intention directed to sentient beings
Who possess the natural maṇḍala,
Even if they are unworthy recipients. HOḤ!
These offerings are merely an Indication
That payment for kindness is not forgotten.

This completes the ritual connected with the entrance of the student
(into the maṇḍala).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L. On the dissolution of obscurations in the manner of mercury, the three contemplations of Mahāyoga, outlined above in note 22, are applied.

[2]:

"water of hell" (Tibetan dmyal-ba'i chu), i.e. lava.

[3]:

The attributes of the five senses (Tibetan 'dod-pa'i yon-tan lnga, Sanskrit pañcakāmaguṇa).

[4]:

N.L.

[5]:

N.L.

[6]:

N.L.

[7]:

Tibetan mi-gnas-pa indicates that the jñānasattva does not abide in any extraneous or qualified manner.

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(B). The Entry and Empowerment of the Student (in the maṇḍala)—(2): The sequence of the actual foundation of Empowerment]

The second aspect (of the entry and empowerment of the student—is the procedure for the actual empowerment. It has two parts, of which the former comprises the ten empowerments of beneficence.

The Ten Empowerments of Beneficence

These are described as follows (Ch. 10, 9-10):

When the empowerments have been conferred

Of crown-ornament, diadem, rosary.

Armour, victory-banner, seals,

Parasol, vase, food & drink.

And of the five essences,

Henceforth one will become a son of the Conqueror,

Will be without all evil existences,

Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,

And become a master of celestial realms and liberation!

The student is radiantly visualised as a deity, and then a crown-ornament of gemstones is fastened (to the head), whereby he is empowered as a doctrinal king of the three world-systems, and crowned by the five enlightened families to indicate that this is Irreversible. The advantage of this (empowerment) is that the aggregates of consciousness become radiant as the five pristine cognitions.

The diadem is then attached (to the head), the advantage (of this empowerment) being that skillful means and discriminative awareness are coalesced. By (the empowerment of) the rosary one obtains the advantages of the branches of enlightenment, and of retention (of mantras) and contemplation. Similarly, by (the empowerment of) armour, one is unharmed by the weapons of conflicting emotions, and one purifies the network of 13 million energy channels.[1] By (the empowerment of) the victory banner, one conquers disharmonious aspects and is triumphant in battle over saṃsāra. By (the empowerment of) the seals, the forty-two

(syllabic) aggregates of thought attain the level of the Cyclical Mass of Syllables.[2] By (the empowerment of) the parasol, one is protected from the torments of conflicting emotion, and a rain of spirituality descends, purifying the thirty-two petalled lotus-centre in the skull (dung-khang).[3] By (the empowerment of) the vase, the stains of conflicting emotion are purified, and the mind is mollified by an unceasing stream of water. The (empowerment of) food & drink causes the desired attributes to arise as ornaments, thereby removing degeneration and bringing satisfaction through the bliss of concentration. And (the empowerment of) the five essences purifies the five conflicting emotions and five components into the five pristine cognitions and five enlightened families respectively. At the time when these ten empowerments are conferred through their respective sacraments of empowerment, one should visualise that one is endowed with the ability of the excellent body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the buddhas.

The essence of these (empowerments of beneficence) is described as follows in the Tantra of the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The ten elements, the two “pathways of bliss”,
 The contents of the central channel,[4]
 The energy channels which form a network of knots.[5]
 And the sense-organs, components and so forth
 Become blissful centres of pristine cognition,
 And this blissful pristine cognition (is symbolised by) HŪṂ.
 The eight aggregates (of consciousness)
 Become the five natural pristine cognitions.
 The sacraments of mantras which are intentionally adopted
 Arise on all sides, and through their protection
 Liberation from suffering is correctly ascertained.

The Five Empowerments of Ability:

1. The Empowerment of the Listener

The latter part comprises the five empowerments of ability, among which the first is the empowerment of the listener (nyan-pa'i dbang):[6]

The Guru, i.e. the male & female consorts in union, becomes radiant as the male & female central deities, and from their point of union, a reddish yellow syllable BHRUṂ emanates, and is visualised to make contact within the student's ear. With the ritual vajra (the guru) places a drop of nectar thereon, melting the syllable BHRUṂ so that it confers on the (student's) two ears (the shape of a celestial palace) with its four-spoked circle, four rightangled corners and four gates. Therein, are five pairs or ten single syllables TRĀṂ, along with the syllables JAḤ, HŪṂ, VAM, HOḤ, which melt into light, and are thence radiantly visualised as eighteen (deities). These comprise the ten deities of the palace, i.e. the male & female Ratnasambhava surrounded in their four directions by Vajraratna, Vajrasūrya, Vajradhvaja, and Vajrapāśa with their female consorts Mālyā, Puṣpā, Pāśā, and Vajrasukhī; along with the male & female gate-keepers. [7] Then, the four female deities of the seals issue forth from the heart-centre of the guru, and the beings of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) similar to them are invited from Akaniṣṭha.[8] Dissolving (into their

respective beings of commitment) they purify all obscurations in general, and those obscurations connected with listening to the doctrine in particular. The student and the deity melt into light, and are visually created as Ratnasambhava.

Entrusting the volume of the Secret Nucleus (T. 832) to him, (the Guru) makes the following proclamation (Ch. 10, 3):

TRĀM! One should listen to all secrete—
Which are secret, most secret, and supremely secret.
One should examine the secret meaning itself,
And thence it should not be divulged to others.

The subsequent (four empowerments of ability) are arranged in a similar manner.

2. The empowerment of the meditator:

The second is the empowerment of the meditator (sgom-pa'i dbang), according to which the maṇḍala of the deity on whom one's flower has landed is visually created from the seedsyllables of its five enlightened families.

Melting into light, it is recreated as that very deity, who entrusts (the student) with the rosary, which is a sacrament of empowerment, and utters the following verses (Ch. 10, 4):

OM Great son of the conquerors of the three times.
Grasp the indestructible reality
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind!
Make offerings which please all the conquerors.
And be evenly united with all the conquerors.

Buddhaguhya adds that the sacrament of empowerment is (not a rosary) but actually a vajra because (in his view) it is visualised that within the heart is the syllable HŪM, which transforms into a vajra, and then becomes Akṣobhya.[9]

3. The Empowerment of the Expositor:

The third is the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang). The syllable BHRUM emerges on the tongue, and is transformed into a celestial palace, within which are the syllables HRIḤ and JAḤ HŪM VAḤ HOḤ. From these one visualises that there emerge, in the previous manner, the male & female Amitābha, (surrounded by) the deities Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajracakra, and Vajravāk, along with their female consorts Gītā, Ālokā, Sphoṭā, and Dyuticitrā (gsal-bkra-ma).[10]

Entrusting into the hand (of the student) a sharp-edged wheel which is the sacrament of empowerment, he utters the following verses (Ch. 10, 6):

OM The unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine
Are poured to satisfy faithful individuals.
Corresponding to those of superior, mediocre.
And inferior intelligence,

The secrets should be proclaimed, but not otherwise.

4. The Empowerment of Enlightened Activity:

The fourth is the empowerment of enlightened activity (phrin-las-kyi dbang): The celestial palace which was previously (visualised) emerges on the two hands (of the student), and within it are the syllables HĀṀ and so forth. Through transformation, these are visualised to emerge, in the previous manner, as the male & female Amoghasiddhi (surrounded by) the deities Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣita, Vajrayakṣa and Vajramuṣṭi (rdo-rje khu-tshur) and their respective female consorts Nartī, Gandhā (byug-pa), Kiṅkiṇī (dri-'khrol) and Praveśā ('bebs-ma).[11]

Entrusting the crossed-vajra which is a sacrament of empowerment Into the hand (of the student), he utters the following verses (Ch. 10, 5):

OM You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.
Perform all activities without exception.
All the emanations and absorptions
Of the multitude of intermediaries
Perform your requirements!

5. The Empowerment of the King of Indestructible Reality:

The fifth is the empowerment of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po'i dhang): One meditates that on the head and limbs there are five maṇḍalas, outside of which is a ring of wrathful deities. Now, on the shoulder to the right side of the head there are the male & female Akṣobhya, surrounded in the four directions by Sattvavajra, Ratnavajra, Dharmavajra, Karmavajra, and their respective female consorts Sthiravajrā (ldan-ma / brtan-ma rdo-rje). Jvalavajrā, Valivajrā (sdud-ma rdo-rje), and Kṣobhyavajrā. On the head are the male & female Vairocana with their retinue of Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga (rdo-rje chags-pa), and Vajrasādhū, and their respective female consorts Vajralāsyā, Dhūpā, Aṅkuṣā, and Tārā.[12] On the left shoulder is the maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava, as previously described. On the right and left legs respectively are the maṇḍalas of Amoghasiddhi and Amitābha, as before. In the ten cardinal directions outside (the body), including zenith and nadir, one meditates on the maṇḍala of the ten wrathful deities.[13]

The beings of pristine cognition become absorbed therein, and, Joyfully united, they melt into light. Thereby, the student is visualised as Samantabhadra.

The vajra and bell which are sacraments of empowerment are entrusted into his hands, and a permissory initiation is granted with the following verses (Ch. 10, 7):

OM Great indestructible reality
Of the body, speech and mind
Of all the ten directions and four times.
Creator of all maṇḍalas!
Enact the gift of all maṇḍalas!

Then, a maṇḍala is offered and prayers are made in connection with the profound empowerments (zab-dbang): The guru, i.e. the male & female consorts, is visualised as the male and female central deities, and their secret centres are consecrated. The “seminal enlightened mind” (byang-chub-kyi sems) produced by their sexual union emerges from the vajra (= penis) of the male consort as a stream of syllables HUM, and focuses on the tip of the lotus (= vagina) of the female consort, where it becomes radiant as the body of Vajrasattva and is placed directly on the tongue of the student. In this way, the secret empowerment of skillful means (thabs-kyi gsang-dbang) is conferred.

If it is impossible to receive this (empowerment), the disciple should extract the “seminal enlightened mind” from the tip of the lotus of the female consort. This is the secret empowerment of discriminative awareness (shes-rab-kyi gsang-dbang).

And if that too is impossible, (the “seminal enlightened mind”) is extracted from the secret centres of the male & female consorts by the tongue of the male consort, and then directly transposed on the tongue of the student. In this way, the secret empowerment in which skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality (thabs shes-rab gnyis-su med-pa'i gsang-dbang) is conferred.[14] Placed directly on the tongue in this way, the stream of nectar descends to the heart. The deeds of the six classes of living beings and the propensities for sleep are purified, and the mind should abide in a disposition of bliss, radiance, and non-conceptualisation.[15]

Then the mother, herself representing discriminative awareness (prajñāpāramitā), and the disciple are consecrated, as in the secret empowerment: The “seminal enlightened mind”, the product of their meditative equipoise, descends on the tip of the lotus, and is thence potently reversed by the guru who becomes radiant in that disposition of bliss. This is the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition (shes-rab ye-shes-kyi dbang).[16]

Then, one is introduced to this disposition of bliss as a nature without inherent existence, and as the essence of the Great Perfection free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. This is the conclusive path, the empowerment of supreme bliss (bde-ba chen-po'i dbang).[17]

According to this (tradition), the guru cannot confer the secret empowerment on others unless he has received the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition; and the student also does not traverse the path unless he has completed the empowerments. The empowerments are therefore conferred and received in this manner.

Conclusion:

The preceding account refers to those students of powerful intelligence who are free from attachment. During the path of liberation which is followed by those of little intellectual ability, on the other hand, (the empowerments) are achieved simply through contemplation and through pills compounded of the nectar of enlightenment.[18]

There are also some who claim that this (tradition of the Secret Nucleus) refers only to the secret empowerment, but they do not discern the actual and implicit meanings (of this text).[19]

Concerning the sequence of those (empowerments of ability) the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) says:

The seed is planted by the first.

Ability is generated by the second.

Experience is cultivated by the third.

The real nature is secured by the fourth.

And one who experientially cultivates the fifth with steadfastness

Will achieve the supreme accomplishment in this lifetime.

Now, there are some masters of the past who hold that these (empowerments) number eighteen, namely, the ten empowerments of beneficence, the five empowerments of ability, and the three empowerments of profundity. Some also hold that there are sixteen when the three empowerments of profundity are subsumed together.

In this tradition however, the empowerments are subsumed into two categories, namely, empowerments of beneficence and empowerments of ability, making fifteen. Here, the empowerments of profundity are subsumed within the empowerments of ability.[20]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan *rtsa-gnas dra-ba'i tshul-du gnas-pa sa-ya-phraz bcu-gsum*. On the enumeration of energy channels. see also below, pp. 1006-1007.

[2]:

Tibetan *rtog-tshogs bzhi-bcu rtsa-gnyis* refers to the unpurified nature of the forty-two syllables. See Ch. 4. Also, on *yi-ge 'khor-lo'i tshogs-chengyi sa*, see above. Ch. 6, pp. 661, 672-673.

[3]:

On the nature of the crown-centre or *mahāsukhacakra*. see above Ch. 1, p. 404, and below. Ch. 13, p. 1007.

[4]:

I.e. the elements which form the bodies of the male & female consorts, their inner pathways of bliss, alone with the essential seminal fluids in the central channel.

[5]:

Tibetan *mdud tshad-ldan-par dra-ba'i rtsa*.

[6]:

On the following five empowerments of ability (nus-pa'i dbang-linga). see also below, Ch. 10, pp. 870-877.

[7]:

On the male consorts forming the retinue of the five central deities, see T. Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*. pp. 311-312, note 5, where they appear in almost identical forms as the "sixteen Vajrasattvas". For Vajrasūrya (rdo-rje nyi-ma). the latter reads Vajratejas, and for Vajrapāśa (rdo-rje zhags-pa) it reads Vajrahāsa (rdo-rje bzhad-pa). Among the consorts of the first four, Vajrasukhī corresponds to rdo-rje bde-ma. The male & female gatekeepers in this context of Ratnasambhava are the pair among the khro-bo bcu & khro-mo bcu who guard the southern gate. See below, p. 936.

[8]:

Tibetan phyag-rgya lha-mo bzhi indicates the four female gatekeepers, Aṅkuṣā, Pāśā, Sphoṭā, and Gaṇṭhā. See e.g., Ch. 1, p. 430.

[9]:

This view of Buddhaguhya's ('grel-pa rnam-dbye) is not accepted by Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dzongs-rgyan*. p. 287, who explains the sacrament of this empowerment to be a rosary.

[10]:

Vajravāk (rdo-rje smra-ba). Cf. T. Skorupski, *op. cit.*, p. 312, Vajrabhāṣa.

[11]:

For Vajrarakṣita (rdo-rje bsrung-ba) & Vajramuṣṭi (rdo-rje khu-tshur), the latter gives Vajrarakṣa and Vajrasandhi.

[12]:

Cf. T. Skorupski, *op. cit.* p. 312. Sthiravajrā (brtan-ma rdo-rje) is rendered here as Idan-ma rdo-rje, but see below, p. 935, where brtan-ma rdo-rje is given.

[13]:

On the khro-bo bcu. see above, note 11.

[14]:

On these three forms of the secret empowerment, see also below, pp. 812ff., 870-871. Note, as stated below, p. 803, that this empowerment is acquired symbolically in the form of sacramental pills by the majority of

practitioners.

[15]:

Tibetan bde-gsal mi-rtog-pa.

[16]:

On the reversal of "seminal enlightened mind" upwards through the body, see below. Ch. 11, pp. 900-914 and 1010-1019.

[17]:

This is equivalent to the 'dod-chags chen-po'i dbang-bskur, which concludes the path of Anuyoga. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 62.

[18]:

At the present day, empowerments are generally conferred in this symbolic manner.

[19]:

The shes-rab ye-shes-kyi dbang is indicated implicitly in Ch. 10, section 2.

[20]:

I.e. in Ch. 10, sections 2-7.

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(B). The Entry and Empowerment of the Student (in the maṇḍala)—(3): The beneficial attributes which have been proclaimed along with the rites which conclude the feast (offerings)]

[The third aspect (of the entry and empowerment of the student) concerns the beneficial attributes which have been proclaimed along with the rites which conclude the empowerment feast.]

1. The beneficial attributes of empowerment:

It has five parts, among which the first concerns the beneficial attributes of empowerment. This also has four subdivisions, namely, instatement among the conquerors' children, nonregression into the lower vehicles, temporal proximity (of one's goal), and the obtaining of prophetic declarations.

Concerning instatement among the conquerors' children: Starting from the time when one obtains empowerment, one is regarded as a child of the buddhas. In this lifetime one's desire will be accomplished, and in the next, the celestial realms and liberation will be attained. The continuity of all evil existences will be interrupted.

It says accordingly (Ch. 10, 10):

Henceforth you will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences.
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity.
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation.

Concerning (the benefit of) non-regression into the lower vehicles, it says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

As long as one has not obtained the eighth level,
One will fear the lower vehicles.
Whoever enters into and abides in
This most secret vehicle
Is on the level of the conquerors' sons.[1]

Concerning temporal proximity (of the goal), the same text says:

That which others attain in sixteen lifetimes.[2]
Will be obtained in this very lifetime.
Though you would obtain this level of the conquerors' sons,
How will you do so
Without resorting to the secret maṇḍala?
Similarly, those with conviction in the vehicle
Endowed with indestructible reality
Who actually persevere
In this birth and in all births.
Will, at the conclusion of sixteen births.
Obtain the Buddha-hood of quiescence.
Though you may obtain this level of the conquerors' sons.
Without entering the secret vehicle.
You will experience two "countless aeons".
And not become transformed within sixteen lives.

And also in the Secret Treasury of Tantra (rgyud gsang-mdzod):

When genuine empowerment is granted and possessed,
The empowerment will take effect from lifetime to lifetime.
Within seven births even one who is not accomplished
Will obtain accomplishment.[3]

Concerning the obtaining of prophetic declarations, the Tantra of Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-367) says:

Once the student has indeed entered the maṇḍala,
And once the supreme offerings have been accepted.
The empowerment of the indestructible name is conferred.

This declares prophetically that the student
Will become a tathāgata.
Until the nucleus of enlightenment (is obtained)
Through unity with these seals.
That one is well known by his indestructible name,
And then will indeed attain Buddha-hood.[4]

Now, although the enlightened attributes of those who have obtained the levels (of realisation) and those who have obtained empowerment are dissimilar in their miraculous abilities and so forth, this empowerment is a profound path because it draws one near to the attainment of Buddha-hood.[5]

2. The defects of one who has not obtained empowerment:

The second part (see p. 804) concerns the defects of one who has not obtained empowerment:

This text (Ch. 10, 8) accordingly says:

Those who begin to study and so forth.
Without pleasing the master
And without obtaining empowerment
Will have no result, and will be lost.

And in the Kriyātantras, it says:[6]

If one recites the secret mantra of mine
Without cultivating the enlightened mind
And entering into the maṇḍala,
That one will be ruined.

3. The pleasing of the Guru:

The third part concerns the pleasing of the guru, on which subject the Sūtra Which Gathers all Intentions (T. 829) says:

In all ways one should particularly please him.
Introducing; polite speech at the beginning
With the words “genuine guru and spiritual benefactor”.

Regarding the way in which he is to be pleased, the same text also says:

There are eight requirements for pleasing
Which are perfectly offered to the genuine one:
Faith without sorrow and fatigue.
Flexibility without obstinacy and pride,
Material concern (zang-zing) without avarice,
Respect without doubt,
Honesty and directness without basis in deceit,
Independence of mind without loquacity,
Discriminative awareness without delusion.
And superior mind without stains—
These eight are perfectly offered to the genuine one.

Now one should not disregard the injunctions of the Guru, and one should do whatever is asked.

The same text also says:

The burnt offerings associated with the maṇḍala and so forth,
The accepting of students, and the teaching of doctrine
Are not begun without authorisation.
These are inappropriate activities
Except for one who is a genuine object (of refuge).
To act on behalf of others,
One should not enjoy possessions,
But offer them all to the genuine one.
It is Inappropriate in the presence of a genuine one
To study under even a genuine one's student.

If one were freely to enjoy the possessions of the Guru, that would be a defect. As the same text says:

The wretch who possesses
The requisites of a genuine one
But distributes them to another,
Will Indeed make the latter destitute.
Without genuine sustenance,
And deprived of great rapture,
That one will fall into the desolation of famine.

Now after one has been taken Into the following of the Guru, one should be respectful:

After accepting someone as a genuine (Guru),
Whether or not he is certainly genuine,
How can one who has disregarded injunctions be authorised.
If one is ensnared in this way,
One will proceed to the Indestructible Hell, [7]
And endure great unbearable suffering.

And in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Even when lacking in enlightened attributes.
If a Guru is abandoned after being accepted,
One has contempt for the masters of everyone.
One depreciates the Buddhas of the three times.
And has indescribable defects.

Briefly, the defects (of such misconduct) would be immeasurable.

The Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720) also says:

The mighty lord who has become a field of accomplishment [8]
Has the characteristics of all buddhas.
One who does not please him with endeavour

Is obscured for aeons and separated from bliss
By darkness and the like.
The paths including those
Of skillful means and discriminative awareness
Become exceedingly remote.
The transmissions of the sugatas
Endowed with ability, power and grace.
Are similar to gemstones, oceans and space,
And should be accepted with degrees of reverence
Even by great bodhisattvas of the tenth level
Because their ability and power are not deceptive.

4. The Commitments which are to be Guarded:

The fourth part (see p. 804) concerns the commitments which are to be guarded:

It is said in the Sūtra of All-Gathering Awareness (t. 831):

One who has thoroughly perfected the empowerments
Should guard against violations
Of all basic and ancillary commitments.
Supreme accomplishment will thereby be obtained.[9]

5. The Activities of the Feast-offering:

The fifth part concerns the activities of the feast-offering:

This (Secret Nucleus, Ch. 9.18) says:

Then this supreme son of the enlightened family
Offers the kingdom and his own body,
His children, wife, and riches.
Which are most dear and pleasant to his mind.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The eighth bodhisattva level (Acala) is held to be that from which regression is impossible. See also below, pp. 964-968.

[2]:

On this subsumption in one lifetime of the attainments of Kriyātantra, which generally are said to be acquired in sixteen lifetimes, see below, pp. 810-811, 853-854.

[3]:

Accomplishment is also said to occur within seven lifetimes through Kriyātantra. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 153a, 215b.

[4]:

The name empowerment (rdo-rje ming-gi dbang) is known in Caryātantra. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 'i, p. 216a; and for biographical examples of its prophetic application, see Book 2, Pt. 5, PP. 434, 437, 445.

[5]:

This empowerment is clearly seen as an entrance into the path which leads to the desired level.

[6]:

N. L.

[7]:

Tibetan rdo-rje dmyal-ba (Avīci), the lowest level of saṃsāra. See Sgam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation. pp. 56-57.

[8]:

Tibetan dngos-grub zhing-gyur dbang-phyug-ni.

[9]:

On the enumerations of basic and ancillary commitments, see below. Ch. 19.

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[Introduction (3): Empowerment and Its Result—(C). The Result of Meditation through the Creation and Perfection Stages]

The third section (of the third aspect of the overview—see p. 783) is a teaching on the result of meditation through the creation and perfection stages. It has two parts, among which the former (concerns the provisional results).

1. The provisional results:

Provisionally, those who have obtained empowerment maintain the commitments. By meditation on the stages of creation and perfection, they obtain the status of an awareness-holder of maturation (rnam-smin rig-'dzin), and thence the status of an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan (tshe-dbang rig-'dzin).[1]

The Secret Nucleus (Ch. 9, 32) accordingly says:

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness

Will be achieved in six or twelve months,
Or in fourteen or in sixteen.

And on that basis one will also accomplish the status of an awareness-holder of the great seal (phyag-chen rig-'dzin).[2]

2. The conclusive result:

Then concerning the conclusive result, one will obtain the status of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (lhun-grub rig-'dzin).[3]

The Secret Nucleus (Ch. 9, 32) continues:

Within sixteen lifetimes one will (obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five Buddha-bodies.

While it is also reported that supreme accomplishment will be attained in about sixteen lifespans of one hundred years, the number of years contained in these sixteen lifespans, in which individual awareness-holders actually become accomplished, is calculated in terms of the lifespan of their own human contemporaries.[4]

The Indestructible Peak (T. 480) indeed says:

At the conclusion of sixteen births
The Buddha-hood of quiescence will be obtained.

This concludes the exegesis of the overview.
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these types of vidyādhara. see also below, pp. 853-854, 959-961.

[2]:

See below, p. 961.

[3]:

See below, pp. 854-862, 962-969.

[4]:

This point is elaborated in pp. 853-854.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.1]

Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the array of the secret commitments of indestructible reality, and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa dgyes-pa chen-pos / rdo-rje gsang-ba'i dam-
tshig bkod-pa-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas / ched-du brjod-pa 'di-brjod do /
[1]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary on the Mandala of Images (332.2-370.5)]

The Interlinear commentary on Chapter Nine Includes a brief teaching on the enunciation of this maṇḍala, and a detailed exegesis of its nature.

[The former (comments on Ch. 9.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of contemplation had been revealed then the Tathāgata (de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-na), the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-bos) Samantabhadra himself, for the sake of living beings, became equipoised (snyoms-par zhugs) through his inconceivable pristine cognition in (la) the sequence of empowerments. These accord with the maṇḍala array (bkod-pa) of the secret commitments of indestructible reality (rdo-rje gsang-ba'i dam-tshig). Then (nas) in conjunction with his female consort, he uttered (brjod-do) this ('di) following meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa).

[Detailed Exegesis of the Nature of the Mandala of Images (332.4-370.5):]

The latter has three parts, namely the empowerment into the supreme maṇḍala for those of highest acumen, the empowerment into the maṇḍala of coloured powders for those of low acumen, and a synopsis concerning the beings to whom empowerment is given.

[Empowerment into the Supreme Mandala (332.5-349.5):]

The first part has two subdivisions, namely, the empowerment into the maṇḍala of the female consort and the empowerment into the maṇḍala of the male consort.

[Empowerment into the Mandala of the Female Consort (332.5-348.6):]

The former has three aspects, namely: the projection of the maṇḍala and the rites of burnt offering; the making of offerings which are apparent but not inherently existing; and the actual entrance and empowerment.

i. The first of these aspects includes both the projection of the maṇḍala and the rites of burnt offerings; and the former (332.6337-3) comprises both the revelation of the maṇḍala and the preparation of the offerings.

[The revelation of the maṇḍala (of the female consort) has five sections, among which the first concerns the location in which the maṇḍala is projected. (It comments on Ch. 9.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.2]

In the palms of the great seal.

The most subtle and supreme commitment [2]

[Tibetan]

shin-tu phra-ba'i dam-tshig mchog /
phyag-rgya chen-po'i phyag-mthil-du / [2]

Commentary:

[The revelation of the maṇḍala (of the female consort) has five sections, among which the first concerns the location in which the maṇḍala is projected:]

The supremely secret great bliss is a most subtle (shin-tu phra-ba'i) topic because it is hard to know and appreciate; and it is the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog), inappropriate for those who would not attain supreme (accomplishment) in this very lifetime. Therefore, the maṇḍala which confers empowerment abides in (du) the pure secret (or sexual) centre of the female consort, (seated) upon the palms (phyag-mthil) of (-'i) the body sealed with great (chen-po) bliss, i.e. in union with a seal (phyag-rgya) or mudrā possessing the appropriate signs, who is created from and retains (that bliss).[1]

[The second concerns the dimensions of the maṇḍala. (It comments on Ch. 9.3):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the appropriate signs for the mudrā or female consort, see below. Ch. 11, pp. 900-908.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.3]

Is the genuine maṇḍala of Buddha-mind.
It should be four inches (sor-mo) in its dimension. [3]

[Tibetan]

thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor dam-pa-ste /
sor-ni bzhi-yi tshad-du bya / [3]

Commentary:

[The dimensions of the maṇḍala:]

This is the genuine maṇḍala of (-kyi dkyil-'khor dam-pa-ste) the Buddha-mind (thugs) of all Buddhas, where pristine cognition and great bliss are indivisible. As for its measurement in inches (sor-ni), it should be (bya) four (inches) in its dimension (bzhi-vi tshad), indicative of the (four) delights, namely, delight, supreme delight, the delight which is free from delight, and the co-emergent delight.[1]

Accordingly it says in the Tantra of Radiant Expanse (klong-gsal, NGB. Vol. 7):

The secret centre of the female consort
Is the secret and profound maṇḍala
Of all the Buddhas.
It indivisibly confers empowerment
Into the nature of the four pristine cognitions.

[The third concerns the pitchins of the lines. (It comments on Ch. 9.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, p. 271, who clearly states the four-inch maṇḍala to be that of the vagina or "lotus" of the female consort (sor-bzhi-pa'i padma), and the finger-sized maṇḍala to be that of the penis or "vajra" of the male consort (mdzub gang-ba'i rdo-rje). On the four delights (dga'-ba bzhi). see below, pp. 899-914, 1011ff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.4]

Endowed with five seeds, five scents, five gems.
Five essences, five medicines, and five nectars,
It is exceedingly level.
And its lines should be pitched with awareness. [4]

[Tibetan]

'bru-lnga spos-lnga rin-chen lnga /
snying-po lnga-dang sman-lnga-dang /
bdud-rtsi-lnga-nyid rab-bsnyams la /
rig-pas thig-ni gdab-par-bya / [4]

Commentary:

[The pitching of the lines:]

This refers to the purification of the mind of that location (i.e. the mudrā or female consort). It is endowed with five seeds ('bru-lnga), namely, the seeds of birth or the five poisons which (inherently) abide as the pristine cognitions; the five scents (spos-lnga), namely, the five pristine cognitions which are their inherently pure nature; the five gems (rin-chen lnga). namely, the five components; the five essences (snying-po lnga), namely, the five Buddha-bodies; the five medicines (dang sman lnga), namely, the five enlightened families; and (dang) the five nectars (bdud-rtsi lnga). namely, the nature (nyid) of mind where the fivefold buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities are indivisible, and which is pure Inner radiance.[1]

The maṇḍala is also said to be exceedingly level (rab-bsnyams-la) in that it reveals all things as sameness in Buddha-hood. This is because they are such and are known as such. It is with this awareness (rig-pas) that its supreme and pure Brahmā lines (thig-ni) should be pitched (gdab-par-bya) or visualised, representing the mind of the female consort as it radiates great pristine cognition.[2]

If the mudrā is one whose mind has not previously been purified in accordance with the secret mantras, the master should pitch the lines which gradually make her mental continuum pure and radiant according to the lay vows and so forth. Once her mind has been purified, the ritual activities included in the creation and perfection stages, and in the training of the energy channels are also expressed in these lines.

At this Juncture, there are some who draw the four-inch maṇḍala on (a base of) ivory and so forth. Then the lines are (physically) pitched: The five seeds are barley, wheat, peas, sesame, and rice', which derive from the nature of the five components purified as the five buddha-bodies. The five scents are camphor, saffron, white and red sandalwood, and aloeswood, which derive from the nature of the five sense-organs purified as the five enlightened activities. The five precious things are gold, silver, coral, pearl, and gemstones which derive from the nature of the five sense-objects purified as the five enlightened attributes. The five essences are salt, honey, molasses, butter and fruits which are derived from the nature of the five aggregates of consciousness purified as the five pristine cognitions.

The five medicines are white Acorus calamus (shu-dag dkar-po), Cedrus deodars (dbang-po lag-pa), Tinospora cordifolia (sle-tres), Solanum xanthocarpum (kantakāri), and mango fruit (amra'i 'bras-bu), which derive from the nature of the five desired attributes purified as the five modes of buddha-speech.[3]

And the five nectars are the pure-essences of sun, moon, water, earth and human flesh which derive from the nature of the five elemental properties purified as the five enlightened families.[4]

It is held that the lines are pitched after the yarn has been soaked in a solution of these ingredients in equal proportion. Then the maṇḍala of painted colours is placed on the palms of the master, and it is claimed that the empowerment is conferred, beginning from the point when (the maṇḍala) is surrounded with offerings in its cardinal directions and continuing as far as the attainment of the maṇḍala.[5]

However that procedure is not intended in this text (the Secret Nucleus). It is indeed impossible to draw such a maṇḍala, and even if one could, the empowerment into it would lack the superior enlightened attributes. And if, being small, it had (these attributes) it would be implicit that even the smallest of physical forms and the like would have the greatest of merits. This artificial (maṇḍala) is, rather, designed for those of feeble acumen.

The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra (T. 362) concurs with the following words:

There is the ritual for drawing (the maṇḍala),
The procedure for colouring the lines,
And the maṇḍala naturally formed
By these living beings.
The former two artificial sorts of maṇḍala
Are essentially objects to be attained,
But the learned do not regard them
As the actual object of their attainment.

Thus, the empowerment is conferred in the natural maṇḍala of the body.

[The fourth concerns the drawing (of this maṇḍala). (It comments on Ch. 9.5):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See below, p. 815, for a more external interpretation of this maṇḍala and its attributes.

[2]:

On the pitching of the Brahmā lines, see above p. 765 and note 17.

[3]:

On the "twenty-five resultant realities" ('bras-bu chos nyer-nga) of the buddha-level, which are described here, see below, pp. 1034-1039; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 162a. Cf. S. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*. p. 290, for a slightly variant list of symbolic substances.

[4]:

I.e. vaginal fluids, semen, urine, excrement and human flesh are inherently pure as the five enlightened families.

[5]:

On the making of offerings and attainment associated with the present maṇḍala of the female consort, see below, pp. 818-828.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.5]

It should have a four-spoked circle and perimeter
Endowed with a central axis and radial lines.
And a courtyard with four corners,
A quadrangle, and embrasured gates. [5]

[Tibetan]

lte-ba rtsibs-dang ldan-pa-yi /
rtsibs-bzhi 'khor-lo mu-khyud-bcas /
gru-chad bzhi-dang gru-bzhi-yi /
bar-khyams sgo-khyud ldan-par-bya / [5]

Commentary:

[The drawing (of this maṇḍala):]

The nature of the secret centre of the female consort is visualised in the form of the celestial palace. in the middle, it is endowed with a central axis and radial lines (lte-ba rtsibs-dang ldan-pa-yi), the essential nature of which is the four-petalled centre within the vagina.[1] This has a four-spoked circle and perimeter (rtsibs-bzhi 'khor-lo mu-khyud-bcas), outside of which is a lotus in the form of a courtyard (bar-khyams) shaped with four right-angled corners (gru-chad bzhi-dang) and a quadrangle (gru-bzhi-yi): and it should (bya) be visualised to have embrasured gates (szo-khyud ldan-par).

[The fifth concerns the array of its symbols. (It comments on Ch. 9.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above note 87.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.6]

On disks of sun and moon, the size of a round fingernail,
On a lotus seat, the size of a chick-pea.
There is the syllable, the size of a mustard seed.
And derived therefrom the (symbolic) seal is drawn.
The size of a sesame seed. [6]

[Tibetan]

sen-zlum-tsam-gyi nyi-zla-la /
tsa-na'i 'bru-tsam padma'i gdan /
yungs-'bru tsam-gyi yi-ge-la /
phyag-rgya til-'bru tsam-du bri / [6]

Commentary:

[The array of its symbols:]

In that location (or secret centre) of the deity, illustrating the essential nature of flesh-coloured impurities, on a seat composed of the disks of sun and moon, the size of a round fingernail (sen-zlum-tsam-gyi nyi-zla-la), and on a lotus seat, the size of a chick-pea (tsa-na'i 'bru-tsam padma'i gdan) or a split pea, there is the exceedingly clear essence, the size of a mustard seed (yungs-'bru tsam-gyi), which radiates in the form of the syllable (yi-ge) HŪṂ. And derived therefrom (las), the vajra which is the symbolic seal (phyag-rgya) of the non-dual nature, the size of a sesame seed (til-'bru tsam-du) is radiantly visualised to be drawn (bri).

[Secondly, the preparation of offerings (associated with the maṇḍala of the female consort)—(see p. 812, comments on Ch. 9.7):]

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Surrounded by diverse kinds of manufactured cotton.
And by ornaments, garlands, potables, and savouries.
Offerings are excellently made with provisions—
A cloud-mass of songs, verses, dancing.
Gesticulations, and musical trappings.
The female consorts, the female gatekeepers.
And the female spiritual warriors
Make worthy offerings, just as they are desired. [7]

[Tibetan]

bcos-bu'i ras-ni sna-tshogs-dang /
rgyan-'phreng btung-dang bro-bas bskor /
glu-tshig bro-gar rol-mo-yi /
sprin-phung tshogs-kyis rab-tu mchod /
yum-dang sgo-ma sems-ma-yis /
ji-ltar 'dod-pa'i las-bzhin mchod / [7]

Commentary:

[The preparation of offerings (associated with the maṇḍala of the female consort)—(see p. 812):]

On the left side of the mudrā, (the maṇḍala) should be adorned with provisions and offerings, with or without visual support.[1] Surrounded by (bskor) diverse kinds of (sna-tshogs) manufactured (bcos-bu'i) and cotton (ras) fabrics which have been dyed and (dang) by (bas) diverse ornaments (brgyan) including diadems and necklaces, by diverse garlands ('phreng) including pendants and half-pendants, by diverse potables (btung) including tea and ale, and savouries (dang bro-bas) such as meat, cheese-cake (thud) and cheese (da-phrum), one sings the sweetest of songs (glu) and beautiful verses (tshig) of praise, and executes dancing (bro) steps and gesticulations (gar) of the bands. Thus, the offerings are excellently made (rab-tu mchod) with provisions (tshogs-kyis) forming an inconceivable cloud-mass (sprin-phung) of (yi) musical trappings (rol-mo) such as conch-shells, cymbals, lutes, flutes, parasols, and victory-banners.

Moreover, the female consorts (yum-dang) on whom these offerings are conditional, the female gatekeepers (sgo-ma) who grant what is wished, and the female spiritual warriors (sems-me yis) who bring about rejuvenation should adorn (the maṇḍala) and thus make worthy offerings (las-bzhin mchod) of three kinds, just as they are desired (ji-ltar 'dod-pa'i). These (three kinds of offering) respectively generate delight in this (blissful) display itself, in the object of contact and the eye (or subject of contact). It is claimed that the foremost objects of offering made in this context are these outer, inner and secret female consorts who confer bliss.

[The latter (337.3-338.2), which concerns the rites of burnt offering, has two sections.]

[The first is an abbreviated teaching on the burnt offerings of the four rites. (It comments on Ch. 9.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan dmigs-pa'i rten yod-dam med indicates that the offerings may or may not be physically present.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.8]

The fire which has become a mouth.

Endowed with characteristics of shape and colour.

Is summoned forth into (the hearth)

And offerings of the four rites are excellently presented

With provisions of food, drink, and savouries. [8]

[Tibetan]

dbyibs-dang kha-dog mtshan-ldan-bar /
zhal-du gyur-pa'i me-bos-la /
bza'-btung bro-ba'i tshogs-rnams-kyis /
las-bzhi'i mchod-pa rab-tu sbyin / [8]

Commentary:

[An abbreviated teaching on the burnt offerings of the four rites:]

According to the sequence of the four rites, the hearth is endowed with (ldan-par) complete characteristics of (mtshan) different shapes (dbyibs)—round and so forth, and (dang) also colours (kha-dog) such as white. The supramundane deity of fire (me) is summoned forth (bos-la) and invited into the cavity where the nature of the fire god has become a mouth (zhal-du gyur-pa'i) to consume the offerings. Offerings are then made with provisions of food, drink and savouries (bza'-btung bro-ba'i tshogs-rnams-kyis) including curd porridge (zho-zan) and melted butter; and offerings of the four rites (las-bzhi mchod-pa) such as sesame oil for pacification and gemstones for enrichment, are to be excellently presented (rab-tu sbyin) in conjunction with their respective mantras and contemplations.[1]

[The second section is a particular exegesis of the burnt offerings made to wrathful deities. (It comments on Ch. 9.9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the four rites of burnt offering, see above pp. 783-786, and below, pp. 1258-1264. Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, pp. 262-263, who states that the words "where the nature of the fire-god has become a mouth to consume the offerings" are an epithet of Agni.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.9]

This is similar for the maṇḍala of wrathful deities.
One who has refined the subtlest (contemplation)
Should indeed act in the same manner
In the case of the unthinkable (maṇḍalas),
Insofar as they have been estimated by awareness. [9]

[Tibetan]

khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor de-bzhin-te /

shin-tu phra-la sbyangs-pa-yis /
bsam-yas dag-la'ang de-bzhin-bya /
rig-pas dpag-pa tsam-du'o / [9]

Commentary:

[The second section is a particular exegesis of the burnt offerings made to wrathful deities. (It comments on Ch. 9.9):]

In the manner of the burnt offerings made to peaceful deities, this characteristic ritual of the hearth, deity and so forth is to be similar (de-bzhin-te) for the maṇḍala of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-khor). The yogin or one who has (yis) excellently refined (sbyangs-pa) the subtlest (shin-tu phra-la) and most profound essentials of contemplation and so forth should indeed act in the same manner ('ang de-bzhin bya) of ritual sequence in the case of (la) the unthinkable (bsam-yas-dag) maṇḍalas of deities, pleasing them with burnt offerings. The ways in which burnt offerings are made to the maṇḍala of any deity through any rite should be applied insofar as (tsam-du) they have been well estimated (dpag-pa) by one's own awareness (rig-pas) which connects with their provisional situations.

[ii. The second aspect (of the empowerment into the maṇḍala of the female consort—see p. 832) concerns the making of offerings which are apparitional but not Inherent existing (338.2-345.3).]

There are two parts, namely, mental offerings of contemplation and secret offerings of supreme bliss.

The former comprises both offerings of relative appearance which are illusory, and offerings of pristine cognition which is the ultimate reality of the perfection stage.

[The first of these also has two aspects, of which the former is the array of the cloud-mass of the offerings of contemplation. (It comments on Ch. 9.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.10]

The great seal through which offerings are made
Comprises the Buddha-fields of all ten directions
With their provisions, which form a wish-fulfilling
Cloud-mass of the mind—

There is the ground composed of diverse gemstones
Which is pliant, soft and pleasant to touch.

Beautifully designed and bedecked.
 It blazes forth as a mass of precious things
 Which are the origin of all.
 There are shapely pools, most delicious to taste and cool.
 Diverse mansions of gemstones.
 Ornaments, groves of wish-granting trees.
 Melodious songs, the sound of poetic verses.
 Canopies, victory-banners, robes, parasols.
 Long pendants, shoulder-ornaments, half-pendants.
 Diverse [/ supreme] kinds of food and drink.
 And there are male and female deities.
 Themselves ornamented beautifully and
 Numerous as atomic particles.
 Who fill the space of the ten directions
 With their unthinkable dancing, gesticulations and so on,
 And then make offerings extensively to all maṇḍalas. [10]

[Tibetan]

mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-po-ni /
 sems-kyi yid-bzhin sprin-tshogs-kyis /
 phyogs-bcu thams-cad sangs-rgyas-zhing /
 mnyen-'jam reg-na bde-ba-yi /
 sna-tshogs rin-po-che-yi gzhi /
 mdzes-par bris-shing spras-pa-dang /
 kun-'byung rin-chen phung-por 'bar /
 dbyibs-legs rdzing-bu bro-mchog bsil /
 rin-chen khang-pa sna-tshogs-dang /
 rgyan-dang dpag-bsam ljon-pa'i tshul /
 glu-dbyangs tshigs-su bcad-pa'i sgra /
 bla-re rgyal-mtshan na-bza' gdugs /
 do-shal dpung-rgyan se-mo-do /
 bza'-dang btung-ba'i mchog-rnams-dang /
 rang-la mdzes-par brgyan-pa-yi /
 lha-dang lha-mo rdul-snyed-kyis /
 bro-gar la-sogs bsam-yas-kyis /
 phyogs-bcu nam-mkha'i khams-bkang-nas /
 dkyil-'khor kun-la rgyas-par dbul / [10]

Commentary:

[The array of the cloud-mass of the offerings of contemplation:]

The great seal through which offerings are made (mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-no) to the maṇḍalas by mental emanation comprises (ni) the Buddha-fields of all (thams-cad sangs-rgyas zhing) world-systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu) with their provisions (tshogs-kyis) which form a thick cloud-mass (sprin) of wishfulfilling (yid-bzhin) gems, the projection of one's own mind (sems-kyi). These are of the nature of diverse and pure gemstones, radiantly visualised through the syllable BHRUM̐, in the manner of the field of the Bounteous Array.

There is the ground (gzhi), an entirely level surface composed of

gemstones (rin-po-che'i) diverse (sna-tshogs) in substance. Which is ornately bedecked with inconceivable and agreeable details of ornament and array. and is pliant, soft, and pleasant to touch (mnyen-'jam reg-na bde-ba-yi). Beautifully designed (mdzes-par bris) with diverse gems in the manner of a chequerboard. and (shing) bedecked (spras-pa dang) throughout the ten directions with the diverse gems of deities, adorned in clusters, it has a bounteous mountain which blazes forth ('bar) from the syllable TRĀṂ as a network of light-rays or as a mass of (phung-por) the seven precious things which are the origin of all (kun' byung rin-cen) that is desired.

There are, derived from the syllable KHAM, beautifully coloured and shapely (dbyibs-legs) lotus pools (rdzing-bu) including lakes and ponds, filled to the brim with water possessed of eight good qualities—most delicious to taste (bro-mchog), cool (bsil) and so forth. These are covered with flowers and resound with the pleasant chirping of birds.

Concerning these eight qualities (of water), it says in the Transmissions of the Vinaya (Vinayāgama. t. 1-7):

Light, delicious, and soft.
Clear, cool, and unsullied,
Not harmful to the stomach when drunk.
And not harmful either to the throat—
These are the eight attributes
With which water is endowed.

There are, derived from the syllable BHRUM, a multitude of mansions of gemstones (rin-cen khang-pa), adorned with diverse (sna-tshogs-dang) details of shape, colour, and array; and derived from the syllable OM there are, in parklands, garlands in the form of ornaments (rgyan-dang) of precious gems, end groves of (tshal) divine wish-granting trees (dpag-bsam ljon-pa'i), pendant with a network of diverse drapes and gems.

There are, derived from the syllable HRĪḤ, all languages, pleasant melodious songs (glu-dbyangs), the sound of poetic verses (tshigs-su bcad-ra'i sgra) including praises and benedictions, which are naturally arisen. Derived from the syllable OM there are drapes and offering utensils, canopies (bla-bre), victory-banners (rgyal-mtshan), parasols (gdugs), and diverse robes (na-bza') Including both upper and lower garments. Derived from the syllable TRĀṂ there are the inconceivable details of ornamentation such as crowns, necklaces, long pendants, shoulder ornaments, and half-pendants (do-shal dpung-rgyan se-mo-do). Derived from the syllable OM there are diverse kinds of food (bza') endowed with a hundred supreme savours, diverse [or supreme] (sna-tshogs/ mchog-rnams-dang) kinds of delicious nectarine drinks (dang btung-ba'i), and diverse garment-fabrics, a full measure in size (gos-zungs), bedecked with diverse gems. And, derived from the syllable HUM there are the bodies of all sentient beings and the natural expressions of the male and female deities (lha-dang lha-mo), ornamented (brgyan-na-yi), beautifully (mdzes-par) with raiment, ornaments and so forth, which are appropriate to themselves (rang-la), equal in number to and as numerous as atonic particles (rdul-snyed). All of them are pleasing with their unthinkable

(bsam-yas-kyis) dancing (bro) movements of the feet, gesticulations (gar) of the hands, the melodious songs of their music, and so on (la-sogs). It is they who completely fill (bkang) the entire space of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu nam-mkha'i khams) with this cloud of offerings, and then (nas) make offerings (dbul) individually and extensively (rgyas-bar) to all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor kun-la) of ground, path and result, subsumed in the expanse of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

[The latter aspect (of the offerings of relative appearance which are Illusory) concerns the way in which these are presented. (It comments on Ch. 9.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.11]

According to distinctions in the clarity of fortunate ones,
One is either gradually or immediately
Equipoised in the expanse of reality. [11]

[Tibetan]

skal-ldan gsal-ba'i khyad-par-gyis /
rim-gyis yang-na cig-car-du /
chos-kyi dbyings-dang mnyam-sbyor-zhing / [11]

Commentary:

[The latter aspect (of the offerings of relative appearance which are Illusory) concerns the way in which these are presented:]

According to distinctions (khyad-par-gyis) of non-clarity and in the clarity (gsal-ba'i) of the contemplation of Yogins or fortunate ones (skal-ldan), one is either gradually or immediately (rim-gyis yang-na cig-car-du) equipoised (mnyam-sbyor) in the expanse of reality (chos-kyi dbvings-dang) which is vast in radiance, and (zhing) then the offerings are presented.

[Secondly there are the offerings of pristine cognition, which is the ultimate reality of this perfection stage. (It comments on Ch. 9.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.12]

And one should meditate on the great seal
Through which these offerings are made. [12]

[Tibetan]

mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-por bsgom /

Commentary:

[The offerings of pristine cognition, which is the ultimate reality of this perfection stage:]

And, in order to renounce actual attachment to these offerings of contemplation, one should meditate on the great seal through which these offerings are made (mchod-pa'i phyag-rgya chen-por bsgom). This accords with (the view) or tradition that these offering clouds do not exist anywhere apart from one's own mind, that the mind too is of a sky-like nature, without abiding anywhere, and that the threefold Interaction of the object of offering, the subject of offering, and the act of offering is essenceless in that disposition, free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration. One of highest intelligence meditates in this way from the very moment when the offerings are made, and is without grasping or attachment, and one of lower intelligence is established subsequently in that non-referential disposition. [1]

It says in the Sūtra of the lamp of Precious Gems (T. 145):

Know the object to which offerings are made to be sky-like.
And the subject who makes them to be non-referential,
Without apprehension in any respect.
This is the most genuine of all offerings.
Which will excellently obtain the inestimable.
Unthinkable pristine cognition.

The second part (see p. 820) concerns the secret offerings of supreme bliss. These include both offerings of the supreme bliss of skillful means, and offerings of discriminative awareness which does not abide in the two extremes.

[The former comprises both the actual offerings and a teaching on their beneficial attributes, and the first of these (comments on Ch. 9. 13):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The subsequent establishment is also known as the "absorption which follows after insight" (mthong-ba'i rjes-la 'jog-pa) which occurs through

blessing and after recalling the view that one has studied and pondered. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 161-163. in the context of the perfection stage of Mahāyoga.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.13]

When she (the karmamudrā) has radiance or is consecrated.
In the manner of the trichiliocosm absorbed in a mustard seed.
Offerings are made after inviting the maṇḍalas from the expanse.
And the supreme commitment of accomplishment
(Is obtained) once they have been pleased. [13]

[Tibetan]

gsal-ldan-ma'am byin-brlabs-la /
stong-gsum yungs-'bru gzug-tshul-du /
dbyings-nas dkyil-'khor spyān-drang-mchod /
mnyes-nas grub-pa'i dam-tshig mchog / [13]

Commentary:

[The actual offerings and a teaching on their beneficial attributes:]

When she (ma), the action seal (karmamudrā), has radiance (gsal-ldan) of contemplation, or ('am), if lacking that, is ritually consecrated (byin-brlabs-la) by a Yogin who visualises himself as the deity, consecrates her secret centre and so forth, the white and red pure-essences on the tip of her lotus, the size of mustard seeds, are visualised as the maṇḍala. This resembles the miraculous ability of sublime beings which can consecrate all world systems of the trichiliocosm (stong-gsum) to be absorbed (gzug) or enclosed in a mustard seed (yungs-'brur). with the result that the trichiliocosm is not diminished and the mustard seed does not increase.[1] In that manner (tshul-du). offerings are (mchod) to be made after inviting the (spyān-drang) inestimable maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the conquerors and absorbing them into her "lotus-courtyard" from the expanse (dbyings-nas) of reality. without the supporting maṇḍala of her "lotus-courtyard" increasing or the being of pristine cognition (jñānasattva) decreasing. Aroused by the signs of this union, offerings should be made of the bliss that is displayed. Once the deities of the maṇḍala have been pleased (mnyes-nas) thereby, one is thought to have obtained the rank of the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog) of ('i) inconceivable great accomplishment (grub-pa). This (offering) is clearly described in the sequence of ritual service and attainment associated with the aforementioned four-inch maṇḍala array, prior to the entrance of the being of pristine cognition and the conferral of empowerment.[2]

[The second, the beneficial attributes of that offering, are both provisional and conclusive.]

[The former are of two sorts, the first of which are those pleasing to all the buddhas. (It comments on Chapter 9.14):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 46b-47a, and Bhadracaryāpraṇidhānarāja, v. 3a: On the surface of a single atom; Are as many Buddhas as there are atoms.

[2]:

On this entrance and empowerment, see above, pp. 777ff., and below, pp. 829-834.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.14]

Through offerings of the Great Identity

All maṇḍalas of the Buddhas without exception are pleased.

All living beings within the three realms of existence

Are filled with supreme delight. [14]

[Tibetan]

bdag-nyid chen-po mchod-pa-yis /

sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor ma-lus mnyes /

srid-gsum 'gro-ba thams-cad-la /

dga'-ba chen-pos khyab-par-'gyur / [14]

Commentary:

[Those pleasing to all the Buddhas:]

Through offerings (mchod-pa-yis) of the blissful Great Identity (bdag-nyid chen-po) which is made in the maṇḍala of the secret centre of the female consort, all maṇḍalas of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor) of the ten directions and four times without exception (ma-lus) are pleased (mnyes). Also, through the offerings of her bliss that is displayed to the Great Identity or pristine cognition of intrinsic awareness, the deities of the forty-two maṇḍalas and so forth in which sensory bases and activity fields are primordial Buddha-hood are pleased. Furthermore, through the offering-sacraments of the Great Identity, which the male consort confers on the female consort and the female consort confers on the male consort, the deities of skillful means and discriminative awareness are pleased. So

one should know (this offering) to be threefold: outer, inner, and secret.[1]

All living beings, too, are satisfied in the following manner: All living beings ('gro-ba thams-cad-la) possessed of feeling and accumulated thoughts are subsumed within the three realms of existence (srid-gsum), namely, the existence of the desire realm which physically appears through the display of that bliss, the existence of the form realm which is pure and semi-manifest, and the existence of the formless realm which is mental and invisible.[2] They are filled (khyab-par-'gyur) with the supreme (chen-pos) inner radiance free from conceptual elaboration and the four realities which are indivisible from the four delights (dga'-ba) of great pristine cognition.

The four realities are namely: The reality of non-dual body, liberated from the entire subject-object dichotomy because there is no apprehension of the male & female consorts; the reality of non-dual speech, liberated from all conceptual elaboration and attachment because it is inexpressible; the reality of non-dual mind, liberated from accumulated thoughts in supreme bliss, which thus perceives the essence of the natural buddha-body of reality; and the reality of non-dual pristine cognition, which is an uninterrupted cycle of inner radiance, abiding in the great disposition where there is no subjective apprehension with respect to bliss.[3]

The four kinds of inner radiance are namely: The inner radiance of bliss through which at that time the three media (of body, speech, and mind) are filled with delight, causing phenomenal existence to arise as delightful bliss; the inner radiance of radiance through which the naturally radiant essence of mind unimpededly appears from that disposition of bliss as skillful means and discriminative awareness; the inner radiance of non-conceptualisation through which sensations of attachment to subtle and coarse phenomena subside, so that one abides in a non-conceptual state without digression in any respect: and the inner radiance of the inconceivable through which the apparition of ten signs arises from the disposition of reality.

The ten signs are the indications of the single savour of the expanse and pristine cognition, which emerge through the entry of vital energy and mind into the central channel, namely those which resemble smoke, mirage, clouds, fireflies, sun, moon, blazing gemstones, eclipse, stars, and the appearance of light rays. A slightly dissimilar enumeration of the ten signs is also explained in other classes of tantra.[4]

[The latter refers to the conclusive result, or the attainment of Buddhahood. (It comments on Ch. 9.15):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Contrast this explanation where the outer, inner and secret offerings are identified with the union of male & female consorts with that given in the preparatory section above, pp. 818-819, where they are identified with

the female deities of the maṇḍala. The pattern of subject, object and their interaction is however maintained.

[2]:

On the tridhātu, see the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction. The rūpadhātu is said to be semi-manifest (phyed-snang) in the sense that its higher expressions are rang-snang, i.e. manifest only in and of themselves, whereas its lower expressions are considered to be gzhan-snang, i.e. extraneously manifesting. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 51; and on the purification of tridhātu with its propensities. Ibid.. Book 1. Pt. 2, p. 62.

[3]:

Tibetan chos-nyid bzhi-ni: 1) lus gnyis-su med-pa'i chos-nyid: ii) ngag gnyis-su med-pa'i chos-nyid: iii) yid gnyis-su med-pa'i chos-nyid: iv) yeshe gnyis-su med-pa'i chos-nyid.

[4]:

Tibetan 'od-gsal bzhi-ni: i) bde-ba'i 'od-gsal: ii) gsal-ba'i 'od-gsal: iii) mitog-pa'i 'od-gsal: iv) bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa'i 'od-gsal. For a further explanation of inner radiance ('od-gsal) and its symbolic Indications, see below. Ch. 13, pp. 1006ff. The Kālacakratānta and other works include slightly different enumerations of these ten signs. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 206, where this tantra is said to enumerate the ten signs as smoke, mirage, radiance, immaculate sky, butter lamps, blazing flames, noon, sun, vajras, and supreme seminal points.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.15]

Through stability in the Magical Net

All maṇḍalas of the Buddhas without exception.

Which emerge in the ten directions and four times.

And (the beings of pristine cognition) become manifest

To living beings of the three world-systems. [15]

[Tibetan]

sgyu-'phrul dra-ba brtan-pa-yis /

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir gshegs-pa-yi /

sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor ma-lus-dang /

khams-gsum 'gro-rnams mngon-du-'gyur / [15]

Commentary:

[The conclusive result, or the attainment of Buddha-hood:]

Through (yis) (attributes) which emerge from excellent stability in (brtan-pa) the experience of reality, indicated by the ten contemplative signs of skillful means and discriminative awareness associated with the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba), the result is that the nature of all maṇḍalas of the buddhas without exception (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor ma-lus-danz), which emerge in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir gshegs-pa-yi) and (dang) the beings of pristine cognition who perceive with spirituality become manifest (mngon-du-'gyur) to the living beings of the three world-systems (khams-gsum 'gro-rnams). Alternatively, it is said that the maṇḍalas of all the buddhas conclusively cause the components, sensory bases and activity fields to radiate as the deities, and the three media to become manifest as wheels (of adornment), the essence of buddha-body, speech, and mind.

[Secondly there are the offerings of discriminative awareness which does not abide in the two extremes. (This comments on Ch. 9.16):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.16]

Body, speech, mind, and all phenomena
Do not abide in any respect, and are non-referential.
Like an optical illusion, through this union.
Meditate on the space within space. [16]

[Tibetan]

lus-ngag-sems-dang chos thams-cad /
gang-la'ang mi-gnas mi-dmigs-te /
mig-yor tshul-du sbyor-ba-yis /
nam-mkha'-la-ni nam-mkha' bsgom / [16]

Commentary:

[The offerings of discriminative awareness which does not abide in the two extremes:]

The conflicting apprehension, attachment and ordinary thoughts of these male & female consorts who are equipoised in non-duality should be purified right where they are. Therefore, the body, speech, and mind (lus-ngag-sems) of oneself and the female consort, and (dang) the nature of all (thams-cad) outer and inner phenomena (chos) indicated by bliss do not abide in any (gang-la'ang mi-gnas) objective respect, and are non-referential (mi-dmigs-te) also in terms of a subjective mind. in that disposition, like an optical illusion (mig-yor tshul-du) which is non-existent

but apparitional, and through this union (sbyor-ba-yis) of the male & female consorts in non-duality, one should meditate on the space (nam-mkha' bsgom) of the unimpeded pristine cognition or mind-as-such within the space (nam-mkha'-la ni) of the uncreated expanse where skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality. One should become equipoised and playful in the essence of their indivisible reality.[1]

iii. The third aspect (of the empowerment into the maṇḍala of the female consort—see p. 812) concerns the actual entrance and the empowerment (345.3-348.6). its two subdivisions are therefore the entrance and the empowerment.

[The former (comments on Ch. 9.17):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This non-dual union of subjective ye-shes and objective dbyings is emphasised in Anuyoga. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 162bff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.17]

Having performed all these, the mighty lord

Should enter with awareness.

Then the student should be ushered in. [17]

[Tibetan]

kun-byas dbang-phyug rig-pas 'jug /

de-nas slob-ma gzhug-par-bya / [17]

Commentary:

[The former (comments on Ch. 9.17):]

It has two sections. First there is the entrance of the master himself. Having performed all these (kun byas-nas) requisites which precede the ritual. beginning with the meditation on the contemplation of the real,[1] the mighty lord (dbanz-phyug) of the assembled feast-offerings and of yoga, a master of indestructible reality in person, should enter ('jug) first into the maṇḍala with awareness (rig-pas) of contemplation.

Then there is the entrance of the student: Once the master has entered, then the student (de-nas slob-ma) should be ushered in (gzhug-par-bya) to the maṇḍala in accordance with the seventeen procedures for entering.[2]

The latter is the empowerment, which includes both the presentation of offerings (for empowerment) and the actual empowerments connected with the degrees of (the students') intelligence.

[The first has two sections, and the first of these concerns the actual offerings which are presented. (It comments on Ch. 9.18):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. the first of the three contemplations outlined above, note 22.

[2]:

On these seventeen procedures ('jug-pa'i chos bcu-bdun), see above, pp. 786-795.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.18]

Then this supreme son of the enlightened family
Offers the kingdom and his own body.
His children, wife, and riches.
Which are most dear and pleasant to his mind. [18]

[Tibetan]

de-nas rigs-kyi bu-mchog des /
rgyal-srid-dang-ni rang-gi lus /
bu-dang chung-ma nor-gyi dbyig /
rab-tu gces-dang yid-'thad dbul / [18]

Commentary:

[The actual offerings which are presented:]

After the procedures for entering have been concluded, then (de-nas) this (des) son of the enlightened family (rigs-kyi bu), endowed with supreme (mchog) fortune, should make offerings to the guru with all his possessions. He offers (dbul) the kingdom (rgyal-srid) with its provinces, and (dang-ni) his own body (rang-gi lus), his children, wife, and riches (bu-dang chung-ma nor-gyi dbyig), which are diverse precious things including gold and silver. If he has two of each of these, he offers those which are most dear (rab-tu gces) and (dang), in brief, the things which are agreeable and pleasant ('thad) to his own mind (yid).

[The second section concerns the beneficial attributes (of this presentation, commenting on Ch. 9.19):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.19]

If offerings of the five raptures are made to the mighty lord.

Offerings are made to all maṇḍalas.

It goes without saying that (offerings are made)

To the maṇḍala which is at hand?

All defects are purified. [19]

[Tibetan]

dbang-phyug longs-spyod lngas mchod-na /

dkyil-'khor thams-cad mchod-pa yin /

nye-ba'i dkyil-'khor smos-ci-dgos /

nyes-pa thams-cad dag-par 'gyur / [19]

Commentary:

[The second section concerns the beneficial attributes (of this presentation, commenting on Ch. 9.19):]

If offerings are made (mchod-na) of the five (lngas) kinds of desired raptures (longs-spyod) to the master of indestructible reality who is a mighty lord (dbang-phyug) of yoga, offerings are made to all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor thams-cad mchod-pa yin) of the Buddhas of the ten directions and four times. If so, it goes without saying that (smos-ci dgos) offerings are made to the meditational deities in the maṇḍala which is at hand (nye-pa'i dkyil-'khor)!

The Tantra of the Array of Commitments (dam-tshig rnam-par bkod-pa'i rgyud) says:

If offerings are made to the guru or holder of indestructible reality.

Offerings are made to all maṇḍalas.

It goes without saying that (offerings are made) to the maṇḍala at hand!

When defects have ceased, supreme accomplishment will be obtained.

So it is that all defects (nyes-pa thams-cad) of the commitments and vows are exclusively purified (dag-par 'gyur).

[Secondly, there are the actual empowerments connected with the

degree of (the student's) intelligence. (This comments on Ch. 9.20:)]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.20]

If the ascetic discipline of faith and perseverance is well understood.
The empowerments of beneficence are given,
And the empowerments of ability
Should be given sequentially,
And received with compassion.
Such that they are not unproductive. [20]

[Tibetan]

dad-brtson brtul-zhugs rab-rtog-nas /
phan-pa'i dbang-sbyin nus-pa'i dbang /
rim-pa-bzhin-du sbyin-par-bya /
snying-rjes chud-ma-zos-par gzung / [20]

Commentary:

[The actual empowerments connected with the degree of (the student's) intelligence:]

If (na) (the student) is known to have the good fortune whereby the ascetic discipline of faith and perseverance (dad-pa-dang brtson-pa'i brtul-zhugs) is well understood (rab-rtogs), the ten empowerments of beneficence (phan-pa'i dbang) and (dang) the five empowerments of ability (nus-pa'i dbang) [should be given sequentially / rim-pa bzhin-du sbyin-par-bya] by the master; and these are received (gzung) and conferred on the student's mind with superior compassion (snying-rjes), such that they are not unproductive (chud ma-zos-par).

If one is without good fortune, (the empowerments) are not given, or else only the empowerments of beneficence are conferred. The empowerments of ability are not given because there would be a great defect.

This is also said in the following passage from the Tantra of the Supreme commitment: the Great Array of Pristine Cognition (ye-shes bkod-pa chen-po dam-tshig mchog-gi rgyud):

If empowerment has been given to a student
Who is an unworthy recipient,
Both (master and student) will be lost.

In this circumstance one would be obscured by the unending darkness of wrong view which is a vast dense forest of error, one would be disturbed by the brigandry of conflicting emotion, and the light rays of the sun which is the buddhas' spirituality would have no chance to enter into enlightened activity.

There are also some (among you) who say, "Other tantras mention the four empowerments and their fourteen subdivisions, but this tantra of yours (i.e. the Secret Nucleus) is not authentic because it has a disparate enumeration of fifteen derived from both the empowerments of beneficence and ability". Alas! those of unfortunate disposition such as yourselves have not comprehended the classifications (of empowerment) and its meaningful sequence. Such intellects have not even been directed towards the intention of the different classes of tantra. For, the Yogatantras speak of three empowerments, namely, those of the vase, ascetic discipline, and the master of indestructible reality; the Purification of All Evil Destinies (T. 483) speaks of eleven empowerments, or nineteen when they are subdivided; the Summation of the Real (T. 479) and the Tantra of the Hidden Point of the Moon (T. 477) mention three empowerments, i.e. vase, secret, and discriminating pristine cognition. Even the Buddhāsāmāyoga (T. 366.7) would be an inauthentic tantra because it subsumes these in the two empowerments of the master and the student. Considering, however, that all these (tantras) are not flawed because their meanings are similar, how is there a defect in this (Tantra of the Secret Nucleus)? It too is similar in meaning. It is the root of all tantras, and all the methods of empowerment according to the other tantras are gathered within it.[1]

The empowerment of the vase, which is explicitly mentioned, is the water empowerment of Akṣobhya. Those of the crown, diadem, and flower are the empowerments of Ratnasambhava. Those of the seals, i.e. of vajra and bell, are the empowerments of Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi respectively.

And, during the empowerments of ability, there is the empowerment of Vairocana which begins with the verses (Ch. 10.3):[2]

You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.

All attributes such as ascetic discipline, prophetic declaration, and inspiration are revealed through the empowerments of ability, which include the empowerment of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po).[3]

The secret empowerment is explicitly revealed (here), while the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition and the precious empowerment of word (and meaning) are implicitly indicated as its subdivisions.[4]

Inasmuch as this (tantra) conforms in its meaning to the classes of tantra, where is the defect in it? The tongues of those who scorn such a tradition would visibly (i.e. in this very life) protrude below the larynx, and at the time of their death a great apparition of fire would blaze forth.

Who but you would experience such extraordinary indications of the descent into hell? You would deserve compassion for many aeons.[5]

[Empowerment in the Mandala of the Male Consort (3418.6-349.5)]

[The second part (of the empowerment into the supreme maṇḍala for those of highest acumen—see p. 812) is the empowerment in the maṇḍala of the male consort. (It comments on Ch. 9.21):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these various categories of abhiṣeka. see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4 passim and T. Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* Ch. 2 pp. 47-48. For the specific category of fifteen in the *Guhyagarbha*, see above. pp. 795-804, and below. Ch. 10.

[2]:

in the outer three classes of tantra, the vase empowerment has five aspects—those of water, crown, vajra, bell and name, which correspond respectively to Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, and Vairocana. Cf. F. Lessing & A. Wayman *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*. pp. 141ff. Here, according to Mahāyoga, the first four are subsumed in these empowerments of beneficence (phan-pa'i dbang) while the fifth is implied in the fifth empowerment of ability (nus-pa'i dbang). See above, PP. 797-781.

[3]:

The rdo-rje rgyal-po'i dbang-bskur is the highest of the empowerments of ability, in which all five clusters of deities (lha-'i tshom-bu lnga) are present. See above, pp. 800-801, and below. Ch. 10, pp. 876-877.

[4]:

On the higher or three profound empowerments (zab-pa dbang gsum). see above, pp. 801-804 and below, pp. 870-871; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 221a. ff.

[5]:

Tibetan mthong-ba'i chos lce lkog-mo'i 'og-la don-pa. I.e. the signs of birth as a denizen of the hells would be manifested in this very lifetime.

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Alternatively, with palms joined together,
And in the lap of the great seal.
One who is learned should confer (empowerment) in the maṇḍala
Which is a full finger-span in dimension,
In accordance with the ritual. [21]

[Tibetan]

yang-na thal-mo rab-bsnol-nas /
phyag-rgya chen-po'i 'phang-du-ni /
dkyil-'khor mdzub-gang tshad-du bya /
mkhas-pas cho-ga ji-bzhin-bya / [21]

Commentary:

[Empowerment in the Mandala of the Male Consort (3418.6-349.5)]

[The second part (of the empowerment into the supreme maṇḍala for those of highest acumen—see p. 812) is the empowerment in the maṇḍala of the male consort. (It comments on Ch. 9.21):]

There is another tradition derived from the (aforementioned) secret empowerment and the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition in the maṇḍala of the female consort, in which it is revealed that the empowerment is received from the tip of the vajra (penis) of the male consort: Alternatively (yang-na), one who is learned (mkhas-pas) in the skillful means of bliss should visualise himself as the male consort, with palms (thal-mo) in meditative equipoise, joined together (rab-bsnol-nas) (with the female consort) as the great seal (phyag-rgya chen-po) or body of the deity. Then indeed (yang), in the lap of (phang-du-ni) (that deity), he should confer (bya) empowerment on the disciple by means of the pure-essence (=semen) in (du) the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of his penis (guhyavajra) which is a full finger-span in dimension (mdzub-gang tshad). [1] This is done in accordance with the ritual (cho-ga ji-bzhin) of empowerment. Then, the empowerments are completely granted.

There are some who, in this context, first confer the empowerments of ability, and subsequently those of beneficence as a permissory blessing.[2] Or indeed they confer all these through the secret empowerment alone. However this refers only to those (students) of keenest acumen. They have not correctly perceived the statement found in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity Reality (P. 4720) that there is another (order) for those of feeble intelligence.

[This text itself says (Ch. 9.20):]

The empowerments of beneficence
And the empowerments of ability
[Should be given sequentially]
And received with compassion,
Such that they are not unproductive.

This passage mentions the empowerments of beneficence first. The order is such that the vase empowerment is found at the beginning, and is then followed by the secret one, the discriminating pristine cognition, and the fourth (empowerment).[3]

[Empowerment in the Mandala of Coloured Powders (349.5-369.4)]

The second part (of the detailed exegesis of the maṇḍala of images—see p. 812) is the empowerment into the maṇḍala of coloured powders for those of low acumen. This has three subdivisions, namely: the drawing of the maṇḍala; its means of attainment; and the result of this attainment.

[Drawing of the Mandala (349.6-353.6):]

The first of these also has three sections, namely, the rituals for the drawing of the small, intermediate, and large maṇḍalas.

[i. The drawing of the small maṇḍala (comments on Ch. 9.22):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan. pp. 271-2 who reads: "taking the female consort into the lap of the male consort, visualised as the great seal of the deity's body, the learned one should perform (the empowerment) in accordance with the ritual, in the supporting maṇḍala where pristine cognition is generated, i.e. the secret vajra (penis) which is symbolised by the five-pronged vajra, one finger span in dimension."

[2]:

"permissory blessing" (Tibetan rjes-snane, Sanskrit anujñā).

[3]:

This is the order in which the empowerments are presented in the author's synopsis, above, pp. 795-804, and also in works of the bka-ma tradition, e.g., Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., pp. 241-280. Interestingly, it requires a rearrangement of the root-verses of the Guhyagarbha. which present the empowerments in the resultant sequence favoured by kLong-chen-pa's exegetical tradition. Cf. Ch. 5. above.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.22]

Alternatively, on a most level site
The maṇḍala should be a full cubit in dimension,
Or a full body-length in dimension,
Or three body lengths in dimension.
With kilas, threads, colour powders.
And a pleasant assistant.
Beautified with robes and ornaments.
The excellent ritual in which the lines are pitched
Should be performed by the great learned one.
Twisting (the threads) together. [22]

[Tibetan]

yang-na sa-gzhi rab-mnyam-la /
dkyil-'khor khru-gang tshad-du bya /
yang-na lus-gang tshad-du-ste /
yang-na lus-ni gsum-gyi tshad /
phur-bu srad-bu tshon-phe-dang /
gos-rgyan mdzes-pa'i yid-'ong grogs /
thig-gdab cho-ga phun-sum-tshogs /
mkhas-ldan chen-pos bsgrims-te bya / [22]

Commentary:

[Drawing of the Mandala (349.6-353.6):]

The first of these also has three sections, namely, the rituals for the drawing of the small, intermediate, and large maṇḍalas.

[i. The drawing of the small maṇḍala (comments on Ch. 9.22):]

First there is the ritual connected with the site. Apart from those empowerments in the supreme maṇḍala, there is alternatively (yang-na) another method in which (the maṇḍala) is drawn on a most level (rab-mnyam-la) surface, in accordance with the ritual of the site (sa-gzhi). A site which has not formerly been purified does not subsequently become pure.

But one, who knows that (Ch. 2.2):

Earth and water are respectively Buddhalocanā and Māmakī and so forth, subsequently purifies the site by clearly visualising that it has been pure from the beginning.[1]

Secondly there is the actual drawing (of the small maṇḍala). The smallest form of the small maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of images should be a full cubit in dimension (khru-gang tshad-du bya). Or (yang-na) the Intermediate form of the small (maṇḍala) should be a full body-length in dimension (lus-gang tshad-du ste), i.e. four cubits ('dom-gang). Or (yang-na) the large form of the small (maṇḍala) should be about three body-lengths in dimension (lus-ni gsum-gyi tshad). It is endowed with kilas (phur-bu) of human bone and so forth, which include the Awesome Kīla (gying-phur) of four inches in the middle of the maṇḍala and those of

eighteen inches for guarding (the maṇḍala) from impediments;[2] with threads (srad-bu) of cotton, wool, lotus fibre, hair from a charnel ground and so forth, double the size of the maṇḍala, which are used to distinguish its sectors;[3] with coloured powders (tshon-phe) of five kinds and so forth, which form distinct colours to symbolise the different enlightened families; and (dang) with a sixteen year-old action seal (karmamudrā) or pleasant (yid-'ong) female assistant (grogs) who is beautified (mdzes-pa'i) with robes and (gos) fine ornaments (rgyan) in order that the rite might be attained.[4]

Then the assistant holds the ends of the threads, while the excellent ritual in which (-i cho-ga phun-sum tshogs) both the line (thig) of pristine cognition and the line (thig) of action are pitched (gdab) should be performed (bya) by the master of indestructible reality, the great one (chen-pos) who is learned (mkhas-ldan) in the rites of the maṇḍala, twisting (bsgrims-te) (the threads) well together, without wavering in body or mind.[5]

[ii. The second section concerning the Intermediate (maṇḍala comments on Ch. 9.23):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Note that the author emphasises the rdzogs-pa chen-po view of an atemporal or primordial purification, even in the context of the external maṇḍala of coloured powders.

[2]:

Tibetan 'gying-phur sor-bzhi; bgegs-bsrung-ba'i don-du sor bco-brgyad-pa. On the term 'gying (also ging), a class of "liberating" spirits who protect the maṇḍala from impediments, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. pp. 278-280. The number four indicates the presence of the ging-chen sde-bzhi: while the number eighteen indicates the gsang-ba sgrol-ging bco-brgyad. on whom see also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, P. 308.

[3]:

Tibetan khrun-du dkyil-'khor nyis-'gyur yod-pa. The double length threads are twisted together to form the ye-shes-kyi thig. See below, note 119.

[4]:

On the attributes of the karmamudrā. see below. Ch. 11, pp. 900-907. There are occasional incidents in NSTB, Book 2, Pts. 3-4, which describe the role of a female assistant in the drawing of these lines.

[5]:

On the distinctions between the ye-shes-kyi thig and the las-kyi thig. also known as the terrestrial line (sa'i thig), see above, pp. 762-765; also F. Leasing & A. Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*. PP-283-287.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.23]

Alternatively, It should be sixteen, and twenty

Or twenty-five cubits in dimension.

One meditates on the five maṇḍalas of enlightened families.

And the forms endowed with Buddha-body, speech and mind are also arrayed. [23]

[Tibetan]

yang-na khru-ni bcu-drug-dang /
nyi-shu'am nyi-shu-rtsa-lngar bya /
rigs-kyi dkyil-'khor lnga-rnams bsgom /
sku-gsung-thugs-ldan gzugs-kyang dgod / [23]

Commentary:

[ii. The second section concerning the Intermediate (maṇḍala comments on Ch. 9.23):]

This (maṇḍala) also has three forms: Alternatively (yang-na). the small form of the intermediate (maṇḍala) should be (bya) sixteen cubits (khru-ni bcu-drug), and (dang) the intermediate form of the intermediate (maṇḍala) twenty (nyi-shu), or ('am) the large form of the intermediate (maṇḍala) twenty-five cubits in dimension (nyi-shu rtse-lngar). In this (maṇḍala), the lines should be pitched in the previous manner. One meditates on (bsgom) the coloured lines as the five maṇḍalas of the enlightened families (rigs-kyi dkyil-'khor lnga-rnams), and visualises the coloured lines of the five pristine cognitions which arise from their fusion. And, once the lines have been pitched and the colours have been applied, the appropriate forms (gzugs) indicative of buddha-body, speech, and mind are also (kyang) to be arrayed (dgod) in the respective locations of the deities. These include the pictures (tsa-ka-li). relief images, or mould engravings symbolic of buddha-body (sku) which mark the different locations of the deities; the seed-syllables or heartmantras symbolic of buddha-speech (gsung): and the vajra and wheel with which they are endowed (ldan) and which indicate the nature of the deities by their hand-implements, symbolic of buddha-mind (thugs).

[iii. The third section concerns the large (maṇḍala, and comments on Ch. 9.24):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.24]

Alternatively, it is one reach of hearing, one yojana.
Or an unthinkable expanse of space in its dimension.
Therein one meditates on the diverse maṇḍalas of the Buddhas.
And, in order that they might be revealed
To deluded unseeing beings.
They should be drawn with coloured powders
Of twenty-five hues or of five hues.
These are to be painted according to the ritual
In which instruction is given. [24]

[Tibetan]

yang-na rgyang-grags dpag-tshad-dam /
nam-mkha'i dbyings-ni bsam-yas-par /
sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor sna-tshogs bsgom /
ma-mthong rmongs-la bstan-phyir mtshon /
kha-dog nyi-shu rtsa-lnga'am /
lnga-yi tshon-gyis bri-bar-bya /
'dul-ba'i cho-ga bzhin-du dgye / [24]

Commentary:

[iii. The third section concerns the large (maṇḍala, and comments on Ch. 9.24):]

This also has three forms: Alternatively (yang-na). the small form of the large (maṇḍala) is one reach of hearing (rgyang-grags). This is the point expressed in the following passage from the Treasury of the Abhidharma (T. 4089):

There are twenty-four inches (aṅguli) in one cubit (hasta),
Four cubits in one bow-span (dhanuḥ [dhanus]).
Five hundred bow-spans in one earshot (krośa),
Which is held to be a long measurement.
Eight of these are called one yojana.

Then, there is the intermediate form of the large (maṇḍala) at one yojana (dpag-tshad), or (dam) the large form of the large (maṇḍala) at an unthinkable expanse of space in its dimension (nam-mkha'i dbyings-ni bsam-yas). Therein (par), the maṇḍala of the awareness-holders is actually emanated, or else one meditates on the diverse (sna-tshogs bsgom) enlightened families of the maṇḍalas of the buddhas (sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor), while the empowerments are conferred.

This implies that empowerment is conferred on the student while the maṇḍala which pervades the entire expanse of space is actually emanated. It is exemplified in the past by the master Buddhaguhya who, (seated) by the shore of Lake Manasarovar, pitched the lines on the lake and then actually revealed and granted the empowerment of the maṇḍala of the indestructible expanse (Vajradhātumaṇḍala) to Mañjuśrīkīrti; and also by the great master Padmasambhava who revealed the maṇḍala of Vajrakumāra, equal to the dimensions of space, in the Lion Cave of sTag-tshang, and then conferred empowerment on Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal.[1]

Although the five Buddha-bodies and five pristine cognitions abides primordially in the mental continuum of sentient beings, they have been obscured by ignorance. In order that they might be revealed to deluded unseeing beings (ma-mthong rmongs-la bstan-phyir),. they should be drawn with (gyis bri-bar-bya) coloured powders (tshon) of twenty-five (nyi-shu rtsa-lnga) hues (kha-dog), which are compounded by dividing (a basic colour) such as white into its five respective shades—yellowish white, reddish white, greenish white, bluish white, and white itself, while the other four (basic colours) are similarly divided. These symbolise the twenty-five facets of pristine cognition, the bodhisattvas in the intermediate directions (of the maṇḍala) and so forth. Or ('am) if all these (twenty-five) are lacking, it should be drawn with coloured powders of five hues (lnga'i tshon), namely, white, yellow, red, green, and blue.

Accordingly, it says in the Tantra of the Extensive Magical Net (t. 834):

All sentient beings without exception
Are totally pervaded by the five pristine cognitions.
But they have been obscured by their own thoughts.
Then, in order to reveal the character of pristine cognition
To all such deluded beings
Who do not see the meaning of the five pristine cognitions.
The colours white, red, yellow, green, and so forth
Are revealed, including black.

As to the drawing of (this maṇḍala), there are detailed, intermediate, and condensed structures and so forth which are to be painted (dgye) by a perceptive lineage-holder with pure practical application and accords to (bzhin-du) the tradition of the ritual in which instruction is given ('dul-ba'i cho-ga) in this context.

The Flash of Splendour (T. 830) accordingly says:

The images are Indeed drawn
Corresponding to the maṇḍala of one's contemplation.

There are some who claim that these (maṇḍalas of coloured powders) apply to the traditions of the Kriyātantras and Caryātantras. and there are some who utilise them as a means of instructing those to be trained. Such persons however seem to misunderstand that the extensive, intermediate, and condensed maṇḍalas of images are indeed distinguished according to the intelligence and resources of individuals. For universal monarchs and

so on there is (the large maṇḍala) of one yojana and so forth; for ordinary persons who are supremely endowed there is the intermediate (maṇḍala); and for those of meagre resources there is said to be (the maṇḍala) of small dimension. The large form of the large maṇḍala is distinguished according to the acumen of a supreme student who is empowered by a sublime guru.

The texts also explain these three kinds (of maṇḍala) without confusion: During (the preparation of) the small (maṇḍala) they speak of the sequence of the lines. During (the preparation of) the intermediate maṇḍala they speak of the consecration and drawing of the coloured lines, and the means of arraying the symbols; and during (the preparation of) the extensive maṇḍala they speak of the perfect method of drawing according to the sequence in which the symbols are painted.

[Attainment of the Mandala (353.6-356.4):]

The second part (see p. 836) concerns the attainment of the maṇḍala. It has three sections, namely: the creation of the maṇḍala; its Invitation; and its absorption in a non-dual manner.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 9.25):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These two incidents are briefly related in NSTB, Book 2, the former in Pt. 4, p. 180, and the latter in Pt. 5. PP. 465-466. On the Vajradhātumaṇḍala, see also below. Ch. 11, pp. 943-944, and on its first dissemination in Tibet, NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 182ff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.25]

The supreme infinite display of contemplation
Is endowed with syllables, symbols, heart-mantras.
Seals, or the Buddha-body, speech and mind.
Consecrated in that (maṇḍala).

There are amazing and wondrous accomplishments
Which are the commitment of all the Buddhas.
If the sequence of liberation will be obtained
Even when seals have been made from clay and so forth.
It goes without saying that (mind) will be purified
By pure pristine cognition. This itself is (Buddha-hood)! [25]

[Tibetan]

ting-'dzin rol-mo mtha'-yas mchog /
yi-ge'am brda'am snying-po'am /
phyag-rgya'am sku-gsung-thugs ldan-par /
byin-brlabs ya-mtshan rmad-bo-che /
'grub-'gyur sangs-rgyas kun-gyi dam /
sa la-sogs-las phyag-rgyar byas /
rnam-grol rim-pa thob-par-'gyur /
dag-pa'i ye-shes-kyis sbyangs-pas /
smos-ci-dgos-te 'di-nyid yin / [25]

Commentary:

[Attainment of the Mandala (353.6-356.4):]

The second part (see p. 836) concerns the attainment of the maṇḍala. It has three sections, namely: the creation of the maṇḍala; its Invitation; and its absorption in a non-dual manner.

[i. The first (comments on Ch. 9.25):]

Through the generation of an enlightened attitude and the supreme infinite display of contemplation (ting-'dzin rol-mo mtha'-yas mchog) of the real nature and so forth, the maṇḍala is visually created, reaching the limits of the expanse of space. Within it, the locations of the different deities are visualised, endowed with (ldan-par) their respective syllables (yi-ge) such as THA, or ('am) drops of colour heaped up as symbols (brda'-am) to indicate the deities corresponding to their body-colours, heartmantras (snying-po) such as HŪṀ and MŪṀ, or ('am) seals (phyag-rgya) including the vajra and the wheel, or the ('am) complete Buddha-body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of the different deities, whichever are appropriate. Thus, the maṇḍala of coloured powders is said to be consecrated in that (byin-brlabs) maṇḍala of contemplation or pristine cognition. As to the goals achieved thereby, there are ('gyur) the common four rites which are amazing (ya-mtshan) and provisional, and the wondrous (rmad-po-che) conclusive accomplishments ('grub) of the maṇḍala of deities. These are the great commitment (dam) of all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas kun-gyi). If, even when the forms of the seals (phyag-rgya) of buddha-body, speech, and mind have been made (byas) from (las) crude external materials including clay (sa). wood, stone and so forth (la-sogs), the sequence of liberation (rnam-grol rim-pa) corresponding to the fortune of respective trainees will be obtained (thob-par-'gyur) in the three different degrees of enlightenment.[1] It goes without saying that (smos-ci dgos-te) the objects of the mind will be purified (sbyangs-pas) by (-gyis) the contemplation of pure pristine cognition (dag-pa'i ye-shes). They will become primordial inner radiance and Buddha-hood will be accomplished. Accomplishment will take effect merely by visualising that this ('di) mind itself (nyid) is (yin) primordial Buddha-hood.

It says in the Sūtra Pristine Cognition At the Moment Decease (T. 122):

If the mind is realised, there is Buddhahood. Therefore, one should

meditate well on the perception that Buddha-hood is not elsewhere attained.

And in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Mind-as-such is perfect Buddha-hood.

[The second section (of the attainment of the maṇḍala) is the Invitation (which comments on Ch. 9.26):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan byang-chub gsum indicates the realisations of Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Buddhas.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.26]

The Great Identity of the maṇḍalas

Of the directions and times

Invites all maṇḍalas from the maṇḍala

Of non-referential Buddha-mind. [26]

[Tibetan]

phyogs-dus dkyil-'khor bdag-nyid-che /

mi-dmigs thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor-las /

dkyil-'khor thams-cad spyang-drang-ngo / [26]

Commentary:

[The second section (of the attainment of the maṇḍala) is the invitation (which comments on Ch. 9.26):]

The Great Identity of (bdag-nyid chen) all the maṇḍalas of the (dkyil-'khor) ten directions (phyogs) and four times (dus) invites all (thams-cad spyang-drang-ngo) maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the beings of pristine cognition which are desired from (las) the disposition of the buddha-body of reality or maṇḍala of Buddha-mind (thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor) which is the fundamental abiding nature, non-referential (mi-dmigs) in any respect, and free from conceptual elaboration.

Now, these (beings) are said to be Invited simply when the intellect wills them to come, and they are also consecrated by all-knowing spirituality because the central deity experiences them as a mere

emanation of his own mind. This is consistent because the mind is itself Buddha-hood, and the maṇḍala is attained by its experience and radiance.

[The third section (of the attainment of the maṇḍala) is the absorption in non-duality (which comments on Ch. 9.27):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.27]

Through meditative union, characteristic of entry
Into the self-manifesting indivisible maṇḍala.
The maṇḍala of ritual service is well perfected.
Emerging from all directions and times.
This is the supreme commitment of the closest ones. [27]

[Tibetan]

rang-snang dbyer-med dkyil-'khor-la /
'jug-pa'i mtshan-nyid mnyam-sbyor-bas /
phyogs-dus kun-nas gshegs-pa-yi /
bsnyen-pa'i dkyil-'khor rab-tu rdzogs /
nye-bar gyur-pa'i dam-tshig mchog / [27]

Commentary:

[The third section (of the attainment of the maṇḍala) is the absorption in non-duality (which comments on Ch. 9.27):]

The visualised maṇḍala of contemplation and the natural spontaneous maṇḍala of the ground both abide in an indivisible (dbyer-med) manner in the self-manifesting (rang-snang) essence. This absorption occurs through (-bas) the meditative union (mnyam-sbyor) of these two maṇḍalas, in the manner of water being poured into water; and it is characteristic of (mtshan-nyid) the entry ('jug-pa) and absorption of the invited maṇḍala of the being of pristine cognition into the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-la) of natural commitment, which has been visualised. Therefore one performs ritual service (bsnyen-pa), aspiring that the Tathāgatas might become present before those who visualise them in person—as has happened to some in accordance with the former acts of all the buddhas, emerging from all the (kun-nas gshegs-pa-yi) ten directions (phyogs) and four times (dus) for the sake of living beings. in consequence of (-'i) this (ritual service) being accomplished, the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of enlightened activity which performs acts of benefit in accordance with the real nature arrives through spirituality and enters in a well perfected (rab-tu rdzogs) manner into the maṇḍala of the being of commitment.

This invitation and absorption is the supreme commitment (dam-tshig mchog) because its intention is directed towards those sons who are the closest ones (nye-bar gyur-pa'i).

[Result of the Attainment of the Mandala (356.4-369.4):]

Thirdly, there is the result which is attained through the maṇḍala. It has three sections, namely: the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind; a teaching on the skillful means through which it is attained: and a description of the result accomplished by that skillful means.

[i. This also has three parts, among which the first is an Illustration (of this array. It comments on Ch. 9.28):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On Jyotiṣka, see Divyāvadāna. pp. 271-282; and on Uttarakuru, ibid., pp. 215-216.

[2]:

Although discrete objects are said to resemble dreams, a distinction is still drawn between their efficacy within the perception of saṃsāra and their ultimate or purified status. This is illustrated in the life of Zur-chung-pa Shes-rab Grags (NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, PP. 339-359) by the following incident: Zur-chung-pa when asked by one, gLan-ston Śāk-ya bZang-po, if, in the Guhyagarbha / Māyājāla tradition, all appearances are regarded as male & female deities, replied: "Who would refute the validity of direct perception, to which discrete, inanimate objects appear?" And when asked if he did not maintain these appearances to be deities, he replied: "Who can contradict the intention of the Sūtras and Tantras concerning the purification of the discrete, impure, delusory appearances perceived by sentient beings?"

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.28]

The wish-granting tree.
The wish-fulfilling gemstone,
And all things that emerge
Are not substantial.
But are the steadfast merit
Of one's own mind. [28]

[Tibetan]

dpag-bsam-shing-dang yid-bzhin-gyi /
rin-po-che-dang 'byung-ba kun /
de-dag rdzas yod-ma-yin-te /
rang-sems bsod-nams brtan-pa yin / [28]

Commentary:

[Result of the Attainment of the Mandala (356.4-369.4):]

Thirdly, there is the result which is attained through the maṇḍala. It has three sections, namely: the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind; a teaching on the skillful means through which it is attained: and a description of the result accomplished by that skillful means.

[i. This also has three parts, among which the first is an Illustration (of this array. It comments on Ch. 9.28):]

The wish-granting tree (dpag-bsam shing-dang) of the gods, the wish-fulfilling gemstone (yid-bzhin-gyi rin-po-che) and (dang) moreover all (kun) the desired things that emerge ('byung-ba) with the appearance of external objects seem to be different wonders and attributes. However, they (de-dag) are not (yod ma-yin-te) substantial (rdzas) objects existing independently and externally. The youthful Jyotiṣka exchanged his mansion of gemstones for the house of Ajātaśatru, and yet it followed after him. Udāgata stretched out his own hands, and brought forth food, clothing and so forth from his well, but others did not. When the gemstone and the wish-granting tree were taken by the gods and the inhabitants of Uttarakuru they experienced all that they desired, but others did not. {GL_NOTE::} But, if you ask from what primary cause these appearances come about, they ripen in this way as the steadfast (brtan-pa) and mature result of the merit (bsod-nams) of one's own mind (rang-sems), the seed or propensity of one's past liberality which abides in the ground-of-all (kun-gzhi). Through its encounter with those conditions, the desired necessities are (yin) seen to emerge. in the same way, the material forms of the different things which emerge in the world manifoldly appear through the propensity for objective appearance in the beginningless ground-of-all. The individual components emerge through the propensity for physical appearance, and the outer and inner phenomena or sensory bases of sentient beings along with the aggregates of individual consciousness emerge through the propensity for conceptual appearance. However, these do not exist as discrete objects, and are similar to dreams. {GL_NOTE::}

[ii. The second concerns the genuine meaning (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind. It comments on Ch. 9.29):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.29]

This wondrous, marvellous, amazing reality
Does not extraneously exist and come forth.
But it emerges in those dispositions
Which have the nature of discriminative awareness.
Steadfast in skillful means.
The real nature of the expanse of discriminative awareness
Becomes the seals of skillful means.
Thus pristine cognition is displayed in pristine cognition
And the display of pristine cognition is itself gathered. [29]

[Tibetan]

ngo-mtshar cho-'phrul rmad-kyi chos /
gzhan-nas yod-'ongs ma-yin-te /
thabs-la brten-pa'i shes-rab-nyid /
de-lta-bu-yi ngang-du byung /
shes-rab dbyings-kyi de-bzhin-nyid /
thabs-kyi phyag-rgyar gyur-pa'i phyir /
ye-shes la-ni ye-shes rol /
ye-shes rol-pa-nyid-kyang gsog / [29]

Commentary:

[ii. The second concerns the genuine meaning (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind. It comments on Ch. 9.29):]

So this (ultimate) maṇḍala of buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, which is the wondrous marvelous (ngo-mtshar cho-'phrul) astonishing and amazing reality (rmad-kyi chos), and provisional accomplishments such as the four rites are obtained in the abiding nature of genuine mind-as-such. However one does not arrive at (this result) by transcending (one's present level). It does not extraneously exist (gzhan-na yod) in space, and it does not come forth ('ongs ma-yin-te) having been summoned into one's presence. But rather, it naturally emerges (byung) and appears as a spontaneous maṇḍala of Buddha-body and pristine cognition in (-du) the dispositions (ngang) of those (de-lta-bu-yi) who master the creation and perfection stages. Such beings have become thoroughly steadfast in (la-brtan-pa'i) the mental cultivation of great compassion in the creation stage of skillful means (thabs), beginning with the visualisation of the outer containing world as the celestial palace, its inner contents as the male & female deities, and oneself as the body of the conqueror; and they have thence become purified in the nature (nyid) of non-dual coalescence through the cultivation of the perfection stage of discriminative awareness (shes-rab), free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration.

The real nature of the expanse of (dbyings-kyi de-bzhin-nyid) reality or discriminative awareness (shes-rab), a nature free from conceptual elaboration, is the disposition of the buddha-body of reality. It becomes (gyur-pa'i) transformed into the seals of skillful means (thabs-kyi phyag-rgya), a display of spontaneous pristine cognition which is arrayed as the selfmanifesting maṇḍala of the body of form within the spontaneous Bounteous Array. Thus (phyir), the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of the buddha-body of form is displayed (rol) in (la-ni) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of the Buddha-body of reality; and it is from this disposition that the display of the pristine cognition (ye-shes rol-pa) of the emanational body is itself (nyid-kyang) said to be gathered (gsog), in the manner of the moon's reflection in water, without straying from its (source) and corresponding to the perception of those to be trained in the world.

It says accordingly in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

The all-knowing one is like a dream, an illusory display, the moon's reflection in water, and an optical illusion. The pristine cognition of the all-knowing one too is like a dream, an illusory display, the moon's reflection in water, and an optical illusion.

Some interpret this verse to mean that the buddha and his pristine cognition are both “gathered”, i.e., gradually acquired, but their view is unconnected with the real nature of the Buddha-body of perfect rapture. [2]

[iii. The third section (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind) concerns the benefit for the sake of others which thereby emerges. (It comments on Ch. 9.30):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On Jyotiṣka, see Divyāvadāna. pp. 271-282; and on Uttarakuru, ibid., pp. 215-216.

[2]:

kLong-chen-pa emphasises that the gradualist view of an accumulated jñānasambhāra, as upheld in the causal vehicles, is not intended here. Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, pp. 277-278, who expresses a similar interpretation of this verse.

[3]:

Although discrete objects are said to resemble dreams, a distinction is still drawn between their efficacy within the perception of saṃsāra and their ultimate or purified status. This is illustrated in the life of Zur-chung-pa Shes-rab Grags (NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, PP. 339-359) by the following incident: Zur-chung-pa when asked by one, gLan-ston Śāk-ya bZang-po, if, in the Guhyagarbha / Māyājāla tradition, all appearances are regarded as

male & female deities, replied: "Who would refute the validity of direct perception, to which discrete, inanimate objects appear?" And when asked if he did not maintain these appearances to be deities, he replied: "Who can contradict the intention of the Sūtras and Tantras concerning the purification of the discrete, impure, delusory appearances perceived by sentient beings?"

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.30]

The conquerors actually emerge and grant protection.
They confer blessing and also become visible
In the same (aforementioned) manner.
With charisma which can perform actions.
This indestructible reality of magical display
Is supreme among kings. [30]

[Tibetan]

rgyal-ba mngon-byung skyob-pa dang /
byin-brlabs ston-pa'ang de-bzhin-te /
bya-byed nus-pa'i gzi-byin-gyis /
sgyu-ma rdo-rje btsan-po'i mchog / [30]

Commentary:

[iii. The third section (of the appropriate array of accomplishments which emerges from the mind) concerns the benefit for the sake of others which thereby emerges. (It comments on Ch. 9.30):]

If one were to think that when the display of pristine cognition is gathered, it would be improper to perform acts of benefit through it on behalf of others, it is said that:[1]

Through the appearance of this gathering
Acts of benefit are Indeed performed.

Now, the conquerors (rgyal-ba) actually (mngon) emerge (byung) as the six sages and so forth corresponding to the volition of sentient beings, and they perform acts of benefit through their twelve deeds and so forth which grant protection (skyob-pa-dang) from the suffering of living beings. They confer blessing (byin-brlabs) whereby they appear from the disposition of the buddha-body of reality as the Buddha-body of perfect rapture in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; and thence they also become visible (ston-pa'ang) to bodhisattvas of the tenth level as the emanational body of natural expression, or the buddha-body of perfect rapture of the five enlightened families. Indeed, they appear in the sane manner (de-bzhin-te) as the (aforementioned) illustrative gemstone and the wish-granting tree,

(which appear) through the spirituality of the Teacher corresponding to the merits experienced by the Individual minds of living beings.

The Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861) accordingly says:

The fields and bodies are radiant like the wishing tree.[2]
They are non-conceptualising like the wish-fulfilling gem.
Ever remaining to guide the world until beings are liberated.
They appear to those who are free from elaboration.

Therefore, the emanational body without independent existence arises of its own accord as a display of enlightened activity, endowed with the charisma (gzi-byin-gyis) of spontaneous spirituality, which can perform actions (bya-byed nus-pa'i) of benefit for the sake of living beings. It is similar to the illumination of the four continents by the brilliant light of sun and moon, and to the reflection of an open lotus flower in a pool. One who possesses the nature of this Indestructible reality of (rdo-rje) buddha-body, speech, and mind, a magical display (sgyu-ma) of pristine cognition, is supreme among (mchog) the genuine great kings (btsan-po) because that one is master over all things.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The self-manifesting magical display of pristine cognition
Is the supreme commitment, or indestructible king.
The great accomplishment of buddha-body, speech and mind
Which illuminates all living beings.

[The second section (of the result attained through the maṇḍala teaches the skillful means through which it is attained. (It comments on Ch. 9.31):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L.

[2]:

The text reads zhi-sku for zhing-sku. Cf. above. Ch. 3, note 92, for a similar occurrence.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.31]

Having perfected the five kinds of ritual.

If one perfectly endowed with the five requisites
And perfect in the five aspects of mantra
Perseveres to undertake (practice) without degeneration [31]

[Tibetan]

cho-ga lnga-ni rdzogs-byas-shing /
yo-byad lnga-ni rdzogs-par ldan /
sngags-kyi yan-lag-lnga rdzogs-pas /
ma-nyams 'jug-la rab-brtson-na / [31]

Commentary:

[The second section (of the result attained through the maṇḍala teaches the skillful means through which it is attained. (It comments on Ch. 9.31):]

One who has been accepted by a spiritual benefactor or guru who reveals the unerring path, who has obtained the empowerments from him, who has kept the commitments and vows, and who is learned in the esoteric instructions of attainment can attain (the result) by excelling in perseverance. Having (byag-shing) mentally perfected (rdzogs) the five kinds of ritual (cho-ga lnga-ni) through which accomplishments are attained, one who is perfectly endowed (rdzogs-par-ldan) with the five requisites (yo-byad lnga-ni) appropriate for attaining accomplishment, and who is perfect in (rdzogs-pas) the five aspects of (-kyi yan-lag lnga) attainment according to the secret mantra (sngags) will swiftly become accomplished.

Now, the five requisites are namely: to be without obstacles and to be in sympathy with the object of attainment: to have a female assistant with complete and auspicious characteristics; not to fall into the two extremes regarding the necessities of one's livelihood and to be without wrong livelihood; to maintain without degeneration the complete sacraments of accomplishment; and to accumulate and have as a support the sacraments of commitment. The five aspects of attainment according to the secret mantras are those which concern the real nature respectively of oneself, the deity, the secret mantra, the recitation, and the emanation & absorption (of light).[1]

This accomplishment will occur if (na) one perseveres (rab-brtson) to undertake ('jug-la) and maintain one's practice, without deseneration (ma-nyams) in the general view and commitments, and without degeneration in the particular provisions which are appropriate conditions for attainment, and provided that one has, by day and night, renounced lethargy and fatigue with respect to attainment. It is said that if one does not persevere there will be no accomplishment.

In some versions of the text, the words “by persevering” (brtson-pas) are found (instead of “if one perseveres”; brtson-na), in which case the general tenor (of this means for attainment) is explained, but (the opposite condition under which) there will be no accomplishment is not implied.[2]

There are also some who hold the five kinds of ritual to be namely: the real nature, its universal appearance, its seed-syllables of buddha-speech, its hand-implements symbolic of buddha-mind, and the perfect buddha-body; the five requisites to be the possessions of food and drink, dance steps and gesticulations, song and verse, robes and ornaments, and "vowels and consonants"; and the five aspects of mantra to be namely: the visual creation of the limbs as a maṇḍala of fifty deities, the knowledge that their corresponding conceptual aspects are the forty-two deities, the subdivision of each of these deities into forty-two, the consecration of their buddha-body, speech and mind, and their empowerment which is conferred by the five enlightened families. However that opinion is unsuitable because it is exclusively biased in the direction of the creation stage. The real nature of the perfection stage, with the requisites of its locations and sacraments are incomplete.[3]

The third section (of the result attained through the maṇḍala—is a description of the results accomplished by these skillful means. It comprises both provisional and conclusive results.

[The former (comments on Ch. 9.32):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This is the definition of the five kinds of ritual (cho-ga lnga), the five requisites (yod-byad lnga), and the five aspects of attainment through the mantras (sngags-kyi yan-lag lnga) which accords with the perfection stage (sampannakrama). For the enumeration corresponding to the creation stage (utpattikrama), see below, pp. 851-852.

[2]:

On these variant readings, see above, p. 220, note 72.

[3]:

This explanation of the five requisites according to utpattikrama is developed in Ch. 12, pp. 954-959; and on the five aspects of mantra. see Ch. 11, pp. 934ff. The definition of these categories according to sampannakrama has already been given, p. 850.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.32]

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months.

Or in fourteen, or in sixteen.
Within sixteen lifespans (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five Buddha-bodies. [32]

[Tibetan]

zhag-ni sum-cu phrag-drug-gam /
bcu-gnyis bcu-bzhi bcu-drug-gis /
dbang-bsgyur rigs-kyi dam-pa 'grub /
de-tshe bcu-drug tshun-chad-kyis /
sku-lnga lhun-gyis rdzogs-pa-ni /
ye-shes thig-le de-nyid-la / [32]

Commentary:

[The third section (of the result attained through the maṇḍala—is a description of the results accomplished by these skillful means. It comprises both provisional and conclusive results.]

[The former (comments on Ch. 9.32):]

The genuine accomplishment (dam-pa) of (-kyi) the awareness (rigs)-holder who is empowered (dbang-bsgyur) with control over the lifespan will be achieved ('grub) by those of highest acumen and perseverance within six months, or literally six times thirty days (zhag-ni sum-cu phrag-drug), or (gam) by those of mediocre acumen in twelve months (bcu-gnyis), or by those of inferior acumen in fourteen (bcu-bzhi). or even by the basest in sixteen (bcu-drug-gis).[1]

Now, the term "genuine", in this context, does not describe those (accomplishments) possessed by the higher (awareness-holders) of the (great) seal and spontaneous presence. Why therefore is this (power over the lifespan) described as genuine? It is so-called because it surpasses (the accomplishment of the awareness-holder) of maturation and because it refers to the attainment of Buddha-hood in this very body, just as the term "supreme phenomenon" (mchog-chos) is employed to describe the supreme phenomenon on the path of connection.[2]

Accordingly, the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736) also says:

Through accomplishments attained by the performance
Of feast-offerings, which conclude one's entry
Into the vision of truth.
Corruption of body, sensory bases and womb comes to an end.
One is transformed into the body of indestructible reality
And passes into nirvāṇa in the reality
Where awareness of the lifespan is discerned.
This is the level of the conquerors
Whereon the body is not relinquished.

On the basis of this attainment of power over the lifespan, one will obtain Buddha-hood in the number of years or time occupied by sixteen (bcu-drug) prolonged lifespans (de-tshe). Within (tshun-chad-kyis) sixteen

such "births", one will obtain the spontaneously perfect (lhun-gyis rdzogs-pa-ni) Buddha-hood of the five buddha-bodies (sku-lnga).

It is held in certain mantra-texts that the (level of the) sky-farers will be traversed and Buddha-hood attained by means of a single body within a single lifespan, and that even if one loiters Buddha-hood will be obtained within seven births or in sixteen. Although this is indeed the case, here in the (tradition of the Secret Nucleus) one who has obtained power over the lifespan is capable of a single lifespan (which lasts) for one thousand six hundred years, and then obtains the status of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence. When the habitual impulses of the (normal) lifespan come to an end, the lifespan is prolonged through skillful means. Shortening the course of each century sixteen times in that way, one abides in a single body.[3]

It says in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

One abides for sixteen lifespans,
Shortening the course of each century.
And attains Buddha-hood
Without relinquishing the body.

And in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

At the conclusion of sixteen births
The Buddha-hood of quiescence will be obtained.

There are some who say that although there is a single lifespan, the reduction in the age of the body sixteen times is effected in the manner of resurrection from the dead, but they are refuted because Buddha-hood is said to be attained without relinquishing the body. In connection with the two (kinds of awareness-holder which are revealed) here, namely those of power over the lifespan and spontaneous presence, the (other) awareness-holders of maturation and the great seal are also implicitly indicated.[4]

The latter concerns the conclusive result or the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence. It has three parts, namely: the accomplishment of self-manifesting buddha-body and pristine cognition in the spontaneous Bounteous Array; the presence of the inwardly radiant field of the body of reality which is the expanse of the real free from conceptual elaborations; and the reemergence of the emanational body in the world-systems of those to be trained.

[The first of these has two subdivisions. among which the former concerns the manifest awakening. (It comments on Ch. 9.33):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On this verse, see also below, pp. 1026-1027; NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, p. 105.

[2]:

"Genuine" (dam-pa) and "supreme phenomenon" (mchog-chos) are both technical terms, respectively indicating distinct steps in the mantra and sutra paths. On the latter term as an aspect of prayogamārga, see kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha'i mdzod. pp. 142-146, also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. p. 130.

[3]:

See also above, pp. 810-811.

[4]:

As explained, the two parts of section 32 refer to the tshe-dbang rig-'dzin and the lhun-grub rig-'dzin directly, whereas the rnam-smin rig-'dzin and phyag-chen rig-'dzin are implied. For an explanation of all four, see pp. 959-974.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.33]

In that nature, the seminal point of pristine cognition.

The appearance of the seminal point

Of pristine cognition itself is inconceivable,

Infinitely supreme, and manifestly perfect

Throughout the ten directions and four times. [33]

[Tibetan]

ye-shes thig-le-nyid snang-ba/

bsam-gyis mi-khyab mtha'-yas mchog /

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi mngon-rdzogs-pa'i / [33]

Commentary:

[The first of these has two subdivisions. among which the former concerns the manifest awakening. (It comments on Ch. 9.33):]

In that nature (de-nyid-la) or reality of the unique seminal point (thig-le) of pristine cognition (ye-shes) free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration, which is the expanse, the naturally pure mind-as-such, and primordial Buddha-hood, without form or radiance, there is found the unceasing and uncreated pristine cognition in which suddenly arisen and imaginary stains are pure right where they are. The appearance (snang-ba) of the seminal point (thig-le) Itself (nyid), where pristine cognition (ye-shes) is mingled indivisibly in that expanse in a single savour, like water

poured into water, is inconceivable (bsam-gyis mi-khyab) and infinitely supreme (mtha'-yas mchog). For, it is spontaneously present as the five buddha-bodies, i.e., those of awakening, indestructible reality and quiescent reality, the radiant body of perfect rapture, and the emanational body of pristine cognition. The supreme accomplishment is said to be obtained because there is a manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa'i) awakening, indivisible from the nature of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi).[1]

[The latter concerns the appearance of the Buddha-fields. (It 135 comments on Ch. 9.34):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The means of realising this manifest awakening of kāya and jñāna are outlined in Ch. 13. pp. 1022-1044.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.34]

The Buddha-field, pure and unthinkable.
In which there is the celestial palace
Free from spatial dimensions.
With its ornamental (form) on the wheel.
And the assembly of its display.
Comprises all unthinkable maṇḍalas, without exception.
When it is seen, mastery is attained
And the benefit which emerges
From its vast Buddha-speech
Is the harmonious pristine cognition,
Manifest in and of itself. [34]

[Tibetan]

zhing-khams rnam-dag bsam-yas-dang /
rgya-dang bral-ba'i gzhal-yas-khang /
'khor-lo'i rgyan-dang rol-mo'i tshogs /
dkyil-'khor ma-lus bsam-yas kun /
mthong-nas nye-bar mnyes-pa-dang /
rgya-chen gsung-las don-'byung ba'ang /
mthun-pa'i ye-shes ramg-snang-ba'o / [34]

Commentary:

[The latter concerns the appearance of the Buddha-fields. (It 135 comments on Ch. 9.34):]

At that time (of manifest awakening), the Buddha-field (zhing-khams) of the spontaneous Bounteous Array becomes present, naturally pure (rnam-dag) and entirely immaculate in its unthinkable (bsam-yas) disposition because it pervades the expanse of reality and the infinity of space. In it is situated the celestial palace (gzhal-yas-khang) without spatial dimensions (rgya) in the ten directions and free from (-dang bral-ba'i) being considered as merely one specific object. With its ornamental (rgyan) form, based on the wheel ('khor-lo'i) of pristine cognition, or the immeasurable ground, which is also symbolised by a wheel of gems; and (dang) the great assembly of its display (rol-mo'i tshogs) where excellent desired attributes are arranged throughout the ten directions, it comprises the nature of all unthinkable (bsam-yas kun) maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the five enlightened families, without exception (ma-lus). For these are spontaneous appearances of inner radiance, pervading the confines of space. When it is seen (mthong-nas) as an object of the pure vision of pristine cognition, mastery is (nye-bar brnyes-pa) actually attained over the ground of great rapture; and (dang) the benefit (don) of living beings which spontaneously emerges ('byung-ba'ang) from its (las) amassed syllables of buddha-speech (gsung), vast (rgya-chen) because they are inexpressible and impartial, is itself said to be the pristine cognition (ye-shes). This is naturally harmonious (mthun-pa'i) with primordial Buddha-hood in the maṇḍala of the spontaneous ground, with radiant visualisation through the profound contemplative maṇḍala of the path, and with the indivisible three degrees of enlightenment in the original abiding nature of the result. Through its presence and the knowledge that it is present, that presence is directed reached.[1]

This Buddha-field moreover is not materially seen by any beings confined within any spatial direction. Rather, it is the pristine cognition of Buddha-hood, manifest in and of itself (rang-snang-ba'o).

[The second part (of the conclusive result, concerning the buddha-body of reality, comments on Ch. 9.35):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan yin-pa-la yin-par shes-pas yin thog-tu slebs-pa yin-no. The meaning is that through the ground and path, the result is directly reached. On "the three degrees of enlightenment" (byang-chub gsum), see above, note 121.

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The real nature which is free from
The single and the multiple,
And is without extremes or middle.
Is not seen even by the Buddhas.
The naturally present pristine cognition
Appears without abiding. [35]

[Tibetan]

gcig-dang du-mar bral-ba-yi /
mtha'-dang dbus-med de-bzhin-nyid /
sangs-rgyas-kyis-kyang mi-gzigs-te /
rang-byung ye-shes gnas-med snang / [35]

Commentary:

[The second part (of the conclusive result, concerning the Buddha-body of reality, comments on Ch. 9.35):]

This apparitional Buddha-field is also absorbed into the field of the buddha-body of reality, an expanse which resembles the moon of the darkest night. It is therefore without outward appearance, but its cognition as inner radiance is unimpeded. This is the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) of the Buddha-body of reality which is (yi) naturally free from the single and the multiple (gcig-dang du-mar bral-ba), and without extremes or middle (mtha'-dang dbus-med), in that expanse where all conceptual elaborations are quiescent, the real aspect of the body of perfect rapture, present when external perception has vanished, is not seen (mi-gzigs-te) as a relative appearance even by the buddhas (sangs-rgyas-kyis kyang). This is because the naturally present (rang-byung) and most subtle pristine cognition (ye-shes) itself appears (snang) or abides in the expanse of quiescence, without abiding (gnas-med) in any (relative) respect.[1]

The Tantra of the Marvelous King (NGB. Vol. 2) accordingly says:

In the palace of reality's expanse all Buddhas of the three times are present without seeing one another.

There are some who hold that this (reality) is not seen by the six classes of living beings but is seen by the buddhas. However, that is not the intention of this present passage, which is connected with the conclusion of the four visionary appearances:[2]

Now, the visionary appearance of actual reality occurs at the time when an (awareness-holder) with power over the lifespan first perceives the pristine cognition of inner radiance as smoke and so forth. The visionary appearance of ever increasing experience occurs when that diffusion intensifies so that outer and inner signs are perceived. Then, the visionary appearance which reaches the limit of awareness occurs when the field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture is perceived. And the visionary appearance of the cessation of reality occurs when that too

becomes inward quiescence, so that there is no apprehension. Then, when the appearance of the field of the buddha-body of perfect rapture vanishes in the original disposition, the ground is directly reached, and it is present without being seen, in an enclosure of spontaneous gemstones.[3]

[The third part (of the conclusive result) which concerns the reemergence of the emanational body in the world-system of those to be trained (comments on Ch. 9.36):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This resultant description of the dharmakāya as inner radiance without extraneous appearance is also referred to as the "Youthful Vase Body" (gzhon-nu bum-pa'i sku), on which see NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 2, p. 43. Pt. 4. p. 207.

[2]:

For a more detailed account of these "four visionary appearances" (snang-ba bzhi), see below. Ch. 13, pp. 1021044; also see note 139.

[3]:

"visionary appearance of actual reality" (chos-nyid mngon-sum-gyi snang-ba), "visionary appearance of ever increasing experience" (nyams-gong-du 'phel-ba'i snang-ba), "visionary appearance which reaches the limit of awareness" (rig-pa tshad-phebs-kyi snang-ba), and "visionary appearance of the cessation of reality" (chos-nyid zad-pa'i snang-ba). On the "enclosure of spontaneous gemstones" (lhun-grub rin-po-che'i sbubs), which is a synonym for the "Youthful Vase Body" (gzhon-nu bum-pa'i sku) or dharmakāya, see also NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 64-65

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.36]

Purified of applied misconceptions.

That pristine cognition is not extraneous to the expanse.

As such, it makes connection through great spirituality.

Whereby it appears to the six classes of living beings

In all times and places without exception. [36]

[Tibetan]

log-par rtog-rtags rnam-dag-cing /

ye-shes dbyings-las mi-gzhan-phyir /

thugs-rje chen-pos 'brel-pas-na /
'gro-drug dus-gnas ma-lus snang / [36]

Commentary:

[The third part (of the conclusive result) which concerns the reemergence of the emanational body in the world-system of those to be trained (comments on Ch. 9.36):]

Then, in the world-systems of those to be trained, with spontaneous enlightened activity for each in accord with his or her needs, the emanational body endowed with the pristine cognition of awareness actually appears. This pristine cognition of spirituality or awareness is purified of (rnam-dag) the entire twofold obscuration of the essence alone with its propensities, without exception, which are applied (brtags) in an imaginary manner by erroneous misconceptions (log-par rtogs). Indeed, the pristine cognition which qualitatively and quantitatively knows all things without exception is vast throughout the ten directions. That same pristine cognition (ye-shes) is not extraneous to (-las mi-gzhan) the treasure of enlightened attributes which form the expanse (dbyings) or naturally pure Buddha-body of reality, but is identical in essence. As such (phyir) it emerges spontaneously and in a non-conceptual manner for the sake of living beings. Through great spirituality (thugs-rje chen-pos) in which both the object or world-systems to be trained and the subject or omniscient pristine cognition are primordially and spontaneously present, a connection is made ('brel) between object and subject, whereby (-bas-na) the eye of pristine cognition sees the world-systems of the impure six classes of living beings ('gro-drug) in all times (dus)—past, future and present, and cognises those for whom instruction is timely. And so, in all places (gnas) without exception (ma-lus). Including the celestial abodes, which are filled with sentient beings, an immeasurable number of emanations including the six sages appears (snang) and performs acts of benefit corresponding to the perception of different (beings).

The Sūtra of the Ten Wheels ('khor-lo bcu-pa'i mdo) accordingly says:

The spirituality of the Sugatas
Over a long period of time
Cognises living beings as an object of training.
And then acts on their behalf.
Without passing beyond time.
It immediately appears to different beings,
Obeisance to you, perceiving with pristine cognition!

Now, these (emanations) emerge without straying from the Buddha-body of reality, (as it is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle. T. 4024):[1]

Without straying from the body of reality.
Through diverse natures of emanation...

According to the tradition of the transcendental perfections, this Buddha-hood may also be accomplished upon the completion of three

"countless" aeons.[2]

This is stated in the following passage from the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

One who has completed three "countless" aeons
Reaches the conclusion of meditation.

The beginning of this (gradual path) is also apprehended as a specific aspiration on the path of provisions.[3]

The same text continues:

One who is good and has the power of aspiration...

According to the outer traditions of the secret mantras, one who has been authorised through transformations in fortune, volition and contemplation, and who maintains the symbols of ritual service will see the visage of the buddhas in this lifetime. Then it is reported that within one, two, or three lifetimes, and so forth Buddha-hood will be obtained.[4]

According to the tradition of Mahāyoga, it is said that through volition, perseverance and the power of the spiritual benefactor, the level (of an awareness-holder) with power over the lifespan will be obtained in this body and then one will be liberated.[5]

Here (in the tradition of the Secret Nucleus). it is revealed that one who has obtained empowerment and keeps the commitments will attain power over the lifespan within six months and so forth, and then on that basis will accomplish enlightenment in a single lifetime and in a single body.[6]

All these (views) are indeed true according to whichever tradition one enters. One should not recognise simply this or that one to be true, because they do differ in their antidotes, paths, effort, and the potency of their conditions. Although detergents ('dag-chal) of different power proceed quickly or slowly to purify stains on a single object, and their speed indeed appears to accord with their respective strengths and powers, for the object itself there is no distinction between close and remote (purification). Therefore, until one has obtained power over the mind, one should adhere to (the sequence of) conditions and deeds, but thereafter time itself freely appears. A long time may become short, and a short time may be emanated over a long period, and so forth, because time is indeed nothing but an appearance of the mind.[7]

Accordingly it is said in the Sūtra Revealed by Vimalakīrti (T. 176):

For those who desire time to be short. I consecrate them to pass many aeons in seven days.

And so forth. Therefore, until the rank of the sublime (Bodhisattvas) has been obtained, the profundity of the path may appear close or remote, but thereafter, one who has obtained power over mind has the Individual power to attain liberation by whatever means.

It says accordingly in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

Subhūti, when the Immaculate eye of the doctrine has been obtained with respect to phenomena, one will, if desired, attain Buddha-hood in unsurpassed enlightenment within seven days. Or one will, if desired, attain Buddha-hood in 18 unsurpassed enlightenment over a multitude of 10[8] aeons. This indeed is the first distinction of learning In skillful means made by bodhisattvas who are great spiritual warriors.

[Synopsis concerning the Beings to whom Empowerment is Given (369.4-370.5)]

[Thirdly (see p. 812), there is the synopsis concerning the beings for whom empowerment is given. (It comments on Ch. 9.37):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra, Ch. 2, v. 53cdff. On this verse, see also NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 1. pp. 19-20.

[2]:

On this causal path of the pāramitā in general, see above Ch. 3, pp. 509-513; and on the term grangs-med in particular, p. 466, note 3.

[3]:

On the sambhāramārga. see above Ch. 3, p. 467, note 5, p. 468, note 8.

[4]:

On the outer tradition of mantras in general, see Ch. 3, pp. 514-515 and notes 75-79. The opinion that the outer tantras lead to Buddha-hood within less than three lifetimes is not the norm in texts of the rNying-ma school. For the orthodox view, see Ch. 3, pp. 514-515.

[5]:

On Mahāyoga in general see Ch. 3, p. 516, and on this result of the tshe-dbang rig-'dzin. see above, pp. 810-811, 853-854.

[6]:

See pp. 853-854 on the tshe-dbang rig-'dzin and the lhun-grub rig-'dzin. As in previous contexts, so in terms of the result, the author seeks to differentiate between the mainstream Mahāyoga tradition and that of the Guhyagarbha.

[7]:

This refers, as stated above. pp. 853-4, to the reduction of sixteen lifetimes. On such temporal transformations, see also the quotation from the Dharmasaṃgīṭisūtra. T. 238, in NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 3. pp. 102-103.

[8]:

The description given in this passage corresponds for the most part to fig. 6. Note that each side of the square in the Illustration has eighteen rather than sixteen large bands (cha-chen), among which the verses omit the eighth on each side, renaming the ninth as the eighth.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.37]

If the faithful ones enter in the maṇḍala of supreme bliss,
Where the two spouses (are present), or when
The five (coloured maṇḍala) has been formed.
They will be equal to their desired and agreeable (accomplishment).
The pristine cognition equal to one's fortune
Will draw near if it is cultivated.
And its most amazing (accomplishment)
Is certain to emerge.
But if those lacking faith spoil it.
They will be lost.—
—Such was his meaningful expression. [37]

[Tibetan]

bde-ba chen-po'i dkyil-'khor-na /
stangs-dbyal gnyis-sam yang-na lnga /
byas-te dad-ldan rab-zhugs-na /
'dod-pa yid-'ong mnyam-par 'gyur /
skal-ba mnyam-pa'i ye-shes-de /
gnyer-na nye-bar 'byung-ba-yi /
ya-mtshan chen-po 'byung-bar nges /
dad-med nyams-na phung-bar 'gyur /
—zhes ched-du brjod-do / [37]

Commentary:

[Synopsis concerning the Beings to whom Empowerment is Given (369.4-370.5)]

[Thirdly (see p. 812), there is the synopsis concerning the beings for whom empowerment is given. (It comments on Ch. 9.37):]

In the maṇḍala of supreme bliss (bde-ba chen-po'i dkyil-'khor-na),

where supreme empowerment is conferred in the aforementioned manner and where the two spouses (stangs-dbyal gnyis-sam), i.e., the male and female consorts, (are present), or when (yang-na) the five (lnga) coloured maṇḍala of coloured powders has been formed (byas-te), if (na) the students who are faithful enter (dad-ldan rab-zhugs) therein, they will be equal to (mnyam-par-'gyur) their desired ('dod-pa) agreeable (yid-'ong) accomplishment, which was obtained by others in the past. The great pristine cognition (ye-shes). equal to one's fortune (skal-ba mnyam-pa'i), will draw near (nye-bar 'byung-ba) as the great accomplishment in this very lifetime, if it is cultivated (gnyer-na); and its (-yi) natural expression—the most amazing (ya-mtshan chen-po) supreme accomplishment, Buddha-hood itself, is certain (nges) to emerge ('byung-ba) and be obtained on the basis of the four rites and power over the lifespan which were (previously) obtained.

It accordingly says in the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833):

Any merits displayed by one who enters.
Manifestly to see the maṇḍala
Of Vajrasattva and the other deities.
Will later have their corresponding effects.

But otherwise, if (na) those lacking faith (dad-ldan) in the doctrine and the guru, and who degenerate (nyams) in the basic and ancillary commitments, engage in these practices, diverse undesirable conditions such as illness and harm will emerge in this life, and in the next life they will be born in evil existences. in this way, they will be lost (phung-par 'gyur).

It says accordingly in the Yogatantras:[1]

One who has not cultivated enlightened mind.
But harbours hesitation and doubt
Does not speak according to the transmitted precepts.
And is faithless.
Will not become accomplished.
That one will subsequently turn to suffering itself.

Such (zhes) was the Meaningful expresion (ched-du brjod-do) uttered by the Tathāgatas and the assembled host of their queens.

[(The conclusion comments on Ch. 9.38):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 9.38]

This completes the ninth chapter of the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled the Secret Commitment of the Indestructible Array. [38]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las rdo-rje bkod-pa'i gsang-ba'i dam-tshig-gi le'u-ste dgu-pa'o / [38]

Commentary:

[(The conclusion comments on Ch. 9.38):]

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the ninth chapter (le'u-ste dgu-pa) of the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po), the abiding nature of the primordial and spontaneous maṇḍala. Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las) genuine pristine cognition. It is entitled (-gi) the most Secret (gsang-ba) Commitment (dam-tshig) of all the Buddhas of the Array (bkod-pa'i) in the maṇḍala of images—which symbolises the Indestructible (rdo-rje) essence of the primordially present maṇḍala.

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Then the transcendent lord, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the contemplation called "the conferral of the king", and then uttered

this meaningful expression. [1]

Derived from the seal of skillful means
In discriminative awareness.
The stream which radiates as a mass of blissful seeds
From the pathway of the vajra, Becomes centred in the lotus.
Is absorbed from the tip (of the tongue).
And transforms the maṇḍala. [2]

Clearly visualised in the wheel-shaped
Celestial palaces of the ears.
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the seals
Of the syllables TRĀṂ.
Therefrom the maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava
Is radiantly emanated, and absorbed.
TRĀṂ! One should listen indeed to all secrets—
Which are secret, most secret, and supremely secret.
One should examine the secret meaning itself.
And thence not divulge it to others. [3]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
(of the heart) which is a radiant wheel.
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the earland of syllables.
Therefrom the maṇḍala of the enlightened family
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! Great son of the conquerors of the three times.
Grasp the indestructible reality
Of buddha-body, speech and mind!
Make offerings which please all the conquerors.
And be evenly united with all the conquerors. [4]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces
Of the wheel-shaped hands.
The essential nature of the seminal points
Form the supreme assembly of the seals of HĀṂ.
From these, the maṇḍala of enlightened activity
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.
Perform all activities without exception.
All the emanations and absorptions
Of the multitude of intermediaries
Perform your requirements. [5]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
Of the wheel-shaped tongue.
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the seals of HRĪḤ.
Therefrom, the maṇḍala of the doctrine
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! The unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine
Are poured to satisfy faithful individuals.

Corresponding to those of superior, mediocre.
And inferior intelligence.
The secrets should be proclaimed.
But not otherwise. [6]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces.
Which are wheels of great movement.
The essential natures of their seminal points
Are the syllables HŪM, OM, SVĀ, ĀM, and HĀ.
Therefrom is derived the meditation
On the five maṇḍalas and the row of wrathful deities.
OM! Great indestructible reality
Of the body, speech and mind
Of all the ten directions and four times.
Creator of all maṇḍalas!
Enact the gift of all maṇḍalas. [7]

Those who begin to study and so forth.
Without pleasing the roaster
And without obtaining empowerment.
Will have no result, and will be lost. [8]

When the empowerments have been conferred
Of crown-ornament, diadem, rosary,
Armour, victory-banner, seals.
Parasol, vase, food and drink.
And of the five essences [9]

Henceforth you will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences,
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation!

—Such was his expression. [10]

This completes the tenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive
with respect to the Real, entitled the Conferral of Empowerment. [11]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.1]

Then the transcendent lord, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised
in the contemplation called "the conferral of the king", and then uttered
this meaningful expression. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos rgyal-po sbyin-pa zhes-bya-

ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do /
[1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (370.5-379.1):]

The latter section (of the creation of the maṇḍala of the ground and the granting of empowerment—see p. 543) is a particular exegesis of the skillful means through which empowerment is granted. It comprises both a brief teaching on the entrance into empowerment and an extensive exegesis of its nature.

[The former (comments on Ch. 10.1):]

Once the maṇḍala had been revealed, then the transcendent lord (denas bcom-ldan-'das), the male and female consort Samantabhadra, the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-po) of uncorrupted bliss, became equipoised in the contemplation called (zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs) the conferral (sbyin-pa) on the student's mind of empowerment as a doctrinal king (rgyal-po) of the three world-systems, and then (nas) uttered this (di brjod-do) meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa) which follows concerning empowerment.

Now, the (Sanskrit) term abhiṣeka means "empowerment". It also means "to be enabled": Just as when, in the world, (a king) has been invested with the kingdom and empowered by the vase of Vedic ritual he is then enabled to hold sway over the country, so, in this context, one is enabled to act in accord with natural expression, and this is called "the conferral of the king".[1]

Moreover, the (Sanskrit) term abhisiṅca also indicates empowerment in the sense that one is clad in pristine cognition and the stains of the three media are cleansed.[2]

The latter has three parts, namely, the empowerments of ability, the empowerments of beneficence, and their beneficial attributes.

[Empowerments of Ability (371.4-376.4):]

This has three sections:

[i. The first is a general teaching on the empowerments of profundity. (It comments on Ch. 10.2):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan rgyal-po sbyin-pa.

[2]:

"three media" (sgo-gsum) of body (lus), speech (ngag), and mind (yid).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.2]

Derived from the seal of skillful means

In discriminative awareness.

The stream which radiates as a mass of blissful seeds

From the pathway of the vajra, Becomes centred in the lotus.

Is absorbed from the tip (of the tongue).

And transforms the maṇḍala. [2]

[Tibetan]

shes-rab thabs-kyi phyag-rgya-las /

bde-ba'i 'bru-tshogs gsal-ba'i rgyun /

rdo-rje'i lam-nas padmar 'khyil /

rtsa-nas bstim-zhing dkyil-khor bsgyur / [2]

Commentary:

[Empowerments of Ability (371.4-376.4):]

This has three sections:

[i. The first is a general teaching on the empowerments of profundity.
(It comments on Ch. 10.2):]

These occur, as previously explained, once the maṇḍala of the deity has been visualised, the master and the students have entered, the empowerments of beneficence and ability have been given, and the female consort (gzung-ma) has been consecrated. The male consort who is the seal of skillful means (thabs-kyi phyag-rgya) becomes equipoised in union with the female consort who is the seal of discriminative awareness (shes-rab), and derived from (las) that union, the “enlightened mind” (semen) of the male consort comes forth from the pathway of the (‘i lam-nas) secret vajra (penis) in a stream which radiates (gsal-ba'i rgyun) as a mass of seeds ('bru-tshogs), or syllables HŪM, blissful (bde-ba'i) in nature. It becomes centred in the lotus (padmar 'khyil) (=vagina) of the female consort, whence it is then absorbed (bstim) internally by the student from the tip (rtse-nas) of the tongue; and (zhing) in this way it transforms (bsgyur) the emanation, absorption, consecration and subsumption of the maṇḍala (dkyil-khor) of the central deity into the heart of the student, whereupon the secret mantras are recited.

Concerning this passage, there are some who claim that all the five empowerments of ability are conferred by means of this ritual, that their

different visualisations and permissory initiations are given, and that the secret stream (of "enlightened mind"), transformed into the seed-syllables beginning with TRĀṂ, is then absorbed into the student so that it emanates and absorbs the five maṇḍalas of the different deities. This view is defective because the order (in which empowerments are conferred) is mistaken.[1]

[ii. The second section is an exegesis of the particular empowerments of ability.]

[It has five parts of which the first concerns the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the listener (nyan-pa'i dbang—It comments on Ch. 10.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As stated above, p. 835. the structural order in which empowerment is conferred requires the empowerments of beneficence (phan-pa'i dbang) to be followed by the empowerments of ability (nus-pa'i dbang), and then by the empowerments of profundity (zab-pa'i dbang).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.3]

Clearly visualised in the wheel-shaped

Celestial palaces of the ears.

The essential nature of the seminal point

Forms the supreme assembly of the seals

Of the syllables TRĀṂ.

Therefrom the maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava

Is radiantly emanated, and absorbed.

TRĀṂ! One should listen indeed to all secrets—

Which are secret, most secret, and supremely secret.

One should examine the secret meaning itself.

And thence not divulge it to others. [3]

[Tibetan]

nyan-byed 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su /

gsal-ba'i thig-le ngo-bo-nyid /

trāṁ-gi phyag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog-las /

rin-chen dkyil-'khor gsal-spro thim /

trāṁ gsang-ba gsang-chen gsang-mchog-gang /

gsang-ba kun-la mnyan-par-bya /

gsang-ba'i don-nyid brtag-pa-las /

Commentary:

[ii. The second section is an exegesis of the particular empowerments of ability.]

[It has five parts of which the first concerns the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the listener (nyan-pa'i dbang—It comments on Ch. 10.3):]

The student is clearly visualised as Ratnasambhava. Within the two ears (nyan-byed) of that deity there are clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) his celestial palaces (gzhal-yas-su), derived from the seed-syllable TRĀM, on wheel-shaped ('khor-lo) bases with four spokes which derive from the syllable BHRUM. Therein, the sense-organ of the ear is present as the essential nature (ngo-bo-nyid) of the translucent seminal point (thig-le) which sustains its ability to hear sound. This nature consists of (-gi) five pairs or ten single syllables TRĀM along with four syllables HŪM and the syllables JAH, HŪM, VAM, HOH. These syllables form the supreme assembly of the (-'i tshogs-mchog) doctrinal seals (phyag-rgya). They melt into light and therefrom (las) the maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava is radiantly (rin-cen dkyil-'khor gsal) visualised.[1] The Guru is emanated (spro) as the real being of pristine cognition, and is absorbed (thim) into the ears of the student, whereupon the obscurations of hearing are purified and melt into light along with the deity. He is then considered to be Ratnasambhava, the commitments are proclaimed, and the following promissory initiation is given: It begins with the syllable "TRĀM!". One should indeed listen to all secrets (gsang-ba kun-la'ang mnyan-par-bya) of the inner vehicles, namely, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and the Great Perfection of Atityoga, which are (gang) respectively secret, most secret and supremely secret (gsang-ba gsang-chen gsang-mchog),[2] and also of the outer tantras of capability, namely Kriyā, Ubhaya and Yoga. Until one has received the empowerment of the master, one should inquire into and examine (brtag-pa) this secret meaning itself (gsang-ba'i don-nyid) in one's own mind; and thence (las) not proclaim it, because one should not divulge it (smra-bar bya-ba min) to other individuals, in other places or times.

[The second is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the meditator (sgom-pa'i dbang—It comments on Ch. 10.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The deities forming the maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava are enumerated above. Ch. 9. pp. 797-798.

[2]:

On the distinctions between the "outer tantras of capability" (Tibetan

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.4]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
(of the heart) which is a radiant wheel.
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the earland of syllables.
Therefrom the maṇḍala of the enlightened family
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! Great son of the conquerors of the three times.
Grasp the indestructible reality
Of buddha-body, speech and mind!
Make offerings which please all the conquerors.
And be evenly united with all the conquerors. [4]

[Tibetan]

gsal-ba'i 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su /
gsal-ba'i thig-le'i ngo-bo-nyid /
yi-ge 'phreng-ba'i tshogs-mchog-las /
rigs-kyi dkyil-'khor gsal-spro thim /
om dus-gsum rgyal-ba'i sras chen-po /
sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rdo-rje zung /
rgyal-ba thams-cad mnyes-mchod-la /
rgyal-ba kun-dang mnyam-par sbyor / [4]

Commentary:

[ii. The second section is an exegesis of the particular empowerments of ability.]

[The second is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the meditator (sgom-pa'i dbang—It comments on Ch. 10.4):]

The heart which is a radiant wheel (gsal-ba'i 'khor-lo) is visualised as the celestial palace (gzhal-yas), and within (-su) it, the ground of recollection is clearly visualised (gsal).[1] The essential nature (ngo-bo-nyid) of (-i) the seminal point (thig-le) or supporting pure-essence of (-ba'i) that ground, the size of a mustard seed, forms the supreme assembly of the garland ('phreng-ba'i tshogs-mchog) of syllables (yi-ge) HŪṂ, the seedsyllable of the central deity. These (syllables) melt into light, and therefrom (las) the maṇḍala of the enlightened family (rigs-kyi dkyil-'khor) of Buddha-mind is radiantly (gsal) visualised.[2] The being of pristine cognition is emanated (spro), and absorbed (thim) so that the obscurations

of the mind are purified, melt into light and are transformed into the deity. Consequently, the following promissory initiation is given as an exhortation to the student:

OM! great son of the conquerors of the three times (dus-gsum-gyi rgyal-ba'i sras-po chen-po), grasp (gzung) the meditation on the profound truth or indestructible reality of (kyi rdo-rje) the buddha-body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of all the buddhas, in which body becomes deity, speech becomes mantra and mind becomes reality. Then from that disposition, make offerings which please all the conquerors (rgyal-ba thams-cad mnyes mchod) and, with supreme bliss, present the outer, inner and secret offerings. And (la) consequently, one should obtain the rank of one who is evenly united with all the conquerors (rgyal-ba kun-dang mnyam-par sbyor).

[The third is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of enlightened activity (phrin-las-kyi dbang;—It comments on Ch. 10.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"ground of recollection" (Tibetan dran-gzhi).

[2]:

On the maṇḍala of buddha-mind associated with the sgom-pa'i dbang, see above. Ch. 9, pp. 798-799. Any meditational deity (yi-dam) representing buddha-mind is appropriate in this context, except in the view of Buddhaguhya who asserts that it refers to Akṣobhya.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.5]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces

Of the wheel-shaped hands.

The essential nature of the seminal points

Form the supreme assembly of the seals of HĀṀ.

From these, the maṇḍala of enlightened activity

Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.

OM! You should engage in activity of indestructible reality.

Perform all activities without exception.

All the emanations and absorptions

Of the multitude of intermediaries

Perform your requirements. [5]

[Tibetan]

lag-pa'i 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su /
 gsal-ba'i thig-le'i ngo-bo-nyid /
 hām-gi phyag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog-las /
 las-kyi dkyil-'khor gsal-spro thim /
 om khyod-ni rdo-rje las yin-gyis /
 las-rnams ma-lus kun-gyis shig /
 pho-nya mang-po'i 'du-phro kun /
 khyod-kyi dgos-pa byed-pa yin / [5]

Commentary:

[The third is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of enlightened activity ('phrin-las-kyi dbang;—It comments on Ch. 10.5):]

The consciousness of contact[1] is clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) in the celestial palaces of the hands which are wheel-shaped (lag-pa'i 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su). The essential nature of the (-i ngo-bo-nyid) translucent seminal points (thig-le) which sustain that consciousness forms the supreme assembly of the seals of the syllable HĀM (HĀM-gi phyag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog).[2] and from (las) the natural transformation of these syllables the maṇḍala of enlightened activity (las-kyi dkyil-'khor) is radiantly (gsal) visualised.[3] The being of pristine cognition is emanated (spros) and absorbed (thim). Melting, this is transformed into the male and female consorts Amoghasiddhi, and the following promissory initiation is granted:

OM!, son of the enlightened family, from today as Amoghasiddhi, you (khyod-ni) should engage in (yin-gyis) the enlightened activity of indestructible reality (rdo-rje las). Perform all activities without exception (las-rnams ma-lus kun gyis-shig) which respectively benefit sentient beings and make offerings to the buddhas. Thereby, all (kun) the assemblies of the multitude of intermediaries (pho-nya mang-po'i), or emanations of buddhas and bodhisattvas naturally confer accomplishment through their incoming absorptions ('du) and attain enlightened activity through their outgoing emanations ('phro). They perform (byed-ba-yin) actions so as to attain all your requirements (khyod-kyi dgos-pa). Alternatively, the accomplishments will be attained through meditation by means of an intermediary.[4]

[The fourth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang—which comments on verses Ch. 10.6):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"consciousness of contact" (Tibetan reg-shes).

[2]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, p. 373. reads HŪM-gi phyag-rgya, but see

above p. 223. note 20, and Lo-chen Dharmasri, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*. p. 287.

[3]:

For the deities in the maṇḍala of enlightened activity (*phrin-las-kyi dkyil-'khor*). which is that of Amoghasiddhi, see above. Ch. 9. PP. 799-800.

[4]:

On the class of Intermediaries (*pho-nya*) who perform the activities of the central deities, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. pp. 303-304; also see below. Ch. 20, p. 1271.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.6]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palace
Of the wheel-shaped tongue.
The essential nature of the seminal point
Forms the supreme assembly of the seals of HRĪḤ.
Therefrom, the maṇḍala of the doctrine
Is radiantly emanated and absorbed.
OM! The unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine
Are poured to satisfy faithful individuals.
Corresponding to those of superior, mediocre.
And inferior intelligence.
The secrets should be proclaimed.
But not otherwise. [6]

[Tibetan]

smra-byed 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su /
gsal-ba'i thig-le'i ngo-bo-nyid /
hrīḥ-yi phyag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog-las /
chos-kyi 'khor-lo gsal-spro thim /
om chos-kyi bdud-rtsi bla-med-kyis /
dad-ldan skyes-bu ngoms-par byos /
rab-'bring tha-ma'i blo-can-la /
mthun-par gsang-bsgrags gzhan-du min / [6]

Commentary:

[The fourth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang—which comments on verses Ch. 10.6):]

The sense-organ of the tongue which apprehends taste is translucent and clearly visualised (*gsal-ba'i*) in the celestial palace of the wheel-shaped

tongue (smra-byed 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su). The essential nature of the seminal point (thig-le'i ngo-no-nyid) [which sustains it] forms the supreme assembly of the seals (phyag-rgya'i tshogs-mchog), consisting of five pairs, which are naturally expressions of (yi) the syllable “HRĪḤ”. These melt into light, and therefrom (las), the maṇḍala ('khor-lo) of (kyi) Amitābha, the enlightened family of the doctrine (chos) or buddha-speech is radiantly (gsla) visualised.[1] The being of pristine cognition is emanated and absorbed (spros-thim), and on melting, Amitābha is actually visualised. Then the following promissory initiation is given:

OM!, the unsurpassed nectars of the doctrine (chos-kyi bdud-rtsi bla-med-kyis)—outer, inner and secret, are poured to satisfy (ngoms-par byos) with the teaching of the doctrine those individuals (skyes-bu) who are faithful (dad-ldan) to any of the different vehicles. Corresponding to (mthun-par) the degrees of acumen, the secrets (gsang) of the doctrine should be differently proclaimed (bsgrag), i.e., the most secret and marvelous vehicle should be given to those of superior (rab) acumen, the causal aspect of the greater vehicle to those of mediocre (acumen), and the vehicles of pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, gods, and humans to those of Inferior intelligence (tha-ma'i blo-can-la). But it should not (min) otherwise (gzhan-du) be proclaimed in such a way that the doctrines of the greater (vehicle) are entrusted to lesser individuals, those of the lesser (vehicle) to greater individuals, and so forth. This is because beings would not turn towards reality, and instead they would accumulate deeds which renounce the doctrine.

Accordingly, it also says in the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871):

Supreme doctrines are not explained to lesser beings.

And in the Sūtra of the Bounteous Array (T. 110):

One should make connections extensively
With one who is a worthy recipient of the doctrine.
But not with one who is an unworthy recipient.

[The fifth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the myriad precepts of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po bka' rab-'byams-kyi dbang—which comments on Ch. 10.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the deities forming the maṇḍala of Amitābha, which is associated with the empowerment of the expositor ('chad-pa'i dbang), see above. Ch. 9. p. 799.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.7]

Clearly visualised in the celestial palaces.
Which are wheels of great movement.
The essential natures of their seminal points
Are the syllables HŪṢ, OM, SVĀ, ĀṢ, and HĀ.
Therefrom is derived the meditation
On the five maṇḍalas and the row of wrathful deities.
OM! Great indestructible reality
Of the body, speech and mind
Of all the ten directions and four times.
Creator of all maṇḍalas!
Enact the gift of all maṇḍalas. [7]

[Tibetan]

bskyod-chen 'khor-lo'i gzhal-yas-su /
gsal-ba'i thig-le'i ngo-bo-nyid /
hūṣ om swā āṣ hā-rnams-las /
dkyil-'khor lnga-dang khro-'phreng bsgom /
om phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi thams-cad-kyi /
sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rdo-rje che /
dkyil-'khor kun-gyi byed-pa-po /
dkyil-'khor kun-gyi sbyin-pa spyod / [7]

Commentary:

[The fifth is the contemplation associated with the empowerment of the myriad precepts of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po bka' rab-'byams-kyi dbang—which comments on Ch. 10.7):]

The sense-organ of the body[1] is translucent and clearly visualised (gsal-ba'i) in the celestial palaces of ('i gzhal-yas-su) the five limbs (of the

body) which include the head. These are wheels of great movement (skyod-chen 'khor-lo) because they perceive and activate the six classes of living beings, the gestures of sealing and their sense-objects. The essential natures of their (-i ngo-bo-nyid) respective seminal points (thig-le) are indivisible from them: On the shoulder to the right side of the head is the syllable HŪṂ, on the head is the syllable OM, on the left (shoulder) is SVĀ, on the left foot is the syllable ĀṂ, and on the right foot is the syllable HĀ. These melt into light, and therefrom is derived (las) the meditation on (bsgom) the five maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor lnga) of the different five enlightened families, and (dang) the row of ('phreng) the ten wrathful deities (khro) who form a protective circle outside them.[2] Then, the following promissory initiation is granted:

OM!, Great indestructible reality of the body, speech, and mind of all (thams-cad-kyi sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rdo-rje che) buddhas of the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi), you, glorious Samantabhadra, are the creator of all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor kun-gyi byed-pa-po) of marvelous nature which primordially pervade all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Therefore, enact (spyod) or confer the genuine gift (sbyin-ba) of all (kun-gyi) accomplishments of the supreme maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) on this son of the enlightened family!

[The third section (of the empowerments of ability) concerns the defects of not possessing empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

"sense-organ of the body" (Tibetan lus-kyi dbang-po).

[2]:

On the deities forming this maṇḍala associated with the empowerment of the king of indestructible reality (rdo-rje rgyal-po'i dbang), see above. Ch. 9. PP. 800-801. The ten wrathful deities (khro-bo bcu) forming the protective circle are enumerated in Ch. 9. note 11.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.8]

Those who begin to study and so forth.

Without pleasing the roaster

And without obtaining empowerment.

Will have no result, and will be lost. [8]

[Tibetan]

slob-dpon mnyes-par ma-byas-shing /
dbang-rnams thob-par ma-byas-par /
nyan-pa la-sogs rtsom-pa-rnams /
'bras-bu med-cing brlag-par 'gyur / [8]

Commentary:

[The third section (of the empowerments of ability) concerns the defects of not possessing empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10.8):]

Those who begin to (rtsom-pa-rnams) study (nyan-pa) the secret mantras, or to attain them, or explain them to others, and so forth (la-sogs), without pleasing the master (slob-dpon mnyes-par ma-byas) of the secret mantras by means of body, speech, mind, and material necessities, and (shing) without obtaining (thob-par ma-byas-par) in their minds the outer, inner, and secret empowerments (dbang-rnams) will have no (med) result ('bras-bu), attainment or accomplishment in this lifetime, and (cing), experiencing suffering in evil existences during subsequent lives, they will be lost (brlag-par 'gyur). This is because they squander the empowerment into the profound doctrine.

It says in the Tantra of the Ocean of Activity (las-kyi rgya-mtsho'i rgyud):

Without obtaining the empowerments,
It is wrong to practice the secret mantras.

[Empowerments of Beneficence (376.4-377.5):]

[Secondly (see p. 870), there are the empowerments of beneficence (which comment on Ch. 10.9):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.9]

When the empowerments have been conferred
Of crown-ornament, diadem, rosary,
Armour, victory-banner, seals.
Parasol, vase, food and drink.
And of the five essences [9]

[Tibetan]

dbu-rgyan cod-pan phreng-ba-dang /
go-cha rgyal-mtshan phyag-rgya-dang /

Commentary:

[Secondly (see p. 870), there are the empowerments of beneficence (which comment on Ch. 10.9):]

The student is radiantly visualised as the real nature of the deity, and then the crown-ornament (dbu-rgyan) is attached, whereby mastery and empowerment are conferred on the student as a doctrinal kins of the three world-systems, illustrating that the eight aggregates of consciousness are radiant and irreversibly present as the five pristine cognitions. The diadem (cod-can) with its silken ribbons illustrates that the two kinds of obscuration are purified and that skillful means and discriminative awareness are coalesced. The rosary ('phreng-ba) of flowers illustrates that deeds and propensities are purified, and that the excellent branches of enlightenment are obtained. These three comprise the empowerments of the crown ornament through which one becomes the regent of the buddhas.

The armour (go-cha) illustrates that one is unharmed by the weapons of conflicting emotions and disciplines the magical apparitions of Māra. The victory-banner (rgyal-mtshan) illustrates that one rises above and purifies all causal bases of saṃsāra, and that disharmonious aspects are conquered. The seals (phyag-rgya) of the five enlightened families including the vajra illustrate that the five conflicting emotions are inherently pure and comprehended as the five pristine cognitions. The parasol (gdugs) illustrates that one is protected from the afflictions of conflicting emotions and that living beings are protected by spirituality. These four comprise the empowerments of excellence for the sake of others.

The vase (bum-pa) illustrates that there is an unceasing stream of water, which cleanses the stains of conflicting emotions and establishes the ability of the five enlightened families. The food and drink (bza'-btung) illustrate that the display of concentration is extensive and free from the disadvantages of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.[1] These two comprise the empowerments of excellence for the sake of oneself.

And (dang) then, when the empowerments of the five essences are conferred (snying-po lnga-yis dbang-bskur), namely, those pure-essences of solar and lunar fluids (sperm and ovum), water (urine), earth (excrement), and human flesh, this illustrates that the five components are indivisibly purified as the five male consorts, the five elements as the five female consorts, and the five conflicting emotions as the five pristine cognitions. This latter empowerment is the one which reveals that saṃsāra and nirvana are indivisible.

[Beneficial Attributes of Empowerment (377.5-379.1):]

[The third topic concerns the beneficial attributes of one who has obtained empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10.10):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. free from extremes of existence and quiescence (srid-zhi).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.10]

Henceforth you will become a son of the Conqueror,
Will be without all evil existences,
Will have the excellent happiness of longevity,
And become a master of celestial realms and liberation!
—Such was his expression. [10]

[Tibetan]

dus-'di phyin-cad rgyal-ba'i sras /
ngan-song thams-cad med-pa-dang /
tshe-ring bde-ba phun-sum-tshogs /
mtho-ris thar-pa'i bdag-por 'gyur /
—zhes brjod-do / [10]

Commentary:

[Beneficial Attributes of Empowerment (377.5-379.1):]

[The third topic concerns the beneficial attributes of one who has obtained empowerment. (It comments on Ch. 10.10):]

Henceforth (dus-'di phyin-chad), after perfectly obtaining the empowerments of ability and beneficence, you, son of the enlightened family, will become a son of the Conqueror (rgyal-ba'i sras), Samantabhadra.

It says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-ba'i rgyud):

Immediately after obtaining the secret empowerment,
One becomes an actual son of Samantabhadra.

Now, even adherents of the Transcendental Perfections say that one becomes a son of the conquerors immediately after cultivating an enlightened attitude.

Correspondingly, it says in the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871):

Immediately after cultivating enlightened mind.
Those who are tormented and bound in the prison of saṃsāra
Should be called sons of the Tathāgatas,
And become an object of obeisance
For gods and human beings of the world.

After obtaining empowerment, one's connections with the deeds and propensities which cause one to fall in the next life into evil existences will actually diminish and cease, so that one will be without all (thams-cad med-pa-dang) the three evil existences (ngan-song) and their sufferings.[1] Also, by acquiring the appropriate causal basis of the empowerment of longevity, in this life one will entirely have the excellent happiness (bde-ba phun-sum-tshogs) of longevity (tshe-ring), wealth, possessions, and genuine mastery; and one will be without suffering. And in the next life, too, one will provisionally be born among the gods and humans of celestial realms (mtho-ris), one will constantly practice the virtuous doctrine, and become ('gyur) a master of (bdag-por) conclusive liberation (thar-pa), in order to achieve the excellent twofold benefit for living beings through the excellent buddha-bodies of reality and form!—Such was his expression (zhes brjod-do).

Accordingly, the Samputatantra (T. 382) also says:

Those who have obtained empowerment.
Endowed with excellent happiness.
Will indeed accomplish all that is good in this life.
And be without all evil existences.
In the next life, too, they will spontaneously
Accomplish the twofold benefit.

[(The conclusion comments on Ch. 10.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

“three evil existences” (ngan-song gsum): those of animals (dud-'gro), tormented spirits (yi-dyags) and denizens of the hells (dmyal-ba).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 10.11]

This completes the tenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Conferral of Empowerment. [11]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa las dbang sbyin-pa'i le'u-

Commentary:

[(The conclusion comments on Ch. 10.11):]

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the tenth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-pa) from (las) the supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) or pristine cognition of buddha-mind. Definitive with Respect to the Real (de-kho-nayid nges-pa), excellent and profound nature, entitled the Conferral, of (sbyin-pa'i) pristine cognition or Empowerment (dbang) as a regent of the Buddhas.

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Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the contemplation called "the king or transformation of the Magical Net", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

The single basis and the manner of seed-syllables.
The blessing and the direct perception:
Through (these) four kinds of excellent realisation.
All things are the great king, manifestly perfect. [2]

The limbs, sense-organs, and consciousness.
All are to be known on maturation as the syllable OM̐.
One meditates on them as the nature
Of the perfect maṇḍala.
Alternatively, one meditates on these
As the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. [3]

Forms, sounds, scents, savours, contacts and so forth
Are to be known on maturation as the syllable MŪM̐.
One meditates on them as the maṇḍala of female consorts.
Alternatively, one meditates on them
As the maṇḍala of female wrathful deities. [4]

The raiment, ornaments, food and drink, songs.
Verses, dance steps and gesticulations.
And the cloud-mass of feast-offerings
Are known as the syllable HŪM̐.
So when these have been well enjoyed,
It is pleasing to the maṇḍala of wondrous source. [5]

Discriminating between Devīs, Nāginīs,
And female (mudrās) of Inferior species.
Or else without discrimination, [6]
There are ritual service, further ritual service.
Rites of attainment, and rites of great attainment. [7]

In the maṇḍala of the lotus of the female consort.
The maṇḍala of blissful Buddha-mind is emanated.
And through the offerings of supreme joy and equanimity.
Made to all maṇḍalas of buddhas, without exception,
(The deities) dissolve. [8]

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids.
Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the maṇḍala. [9]

One will become a skyfarer, radiant and blazing forth.
With longevity, etc.
And a master of the Wish-fulfilling Clouds. [10]

Those who have become fields (of compassion).
Belonging to supreme and less supreme (realms), [11]
Are placed by the learned (yogin)

Upon solar and lunar disks.
With pride, he meditates on that hand-made (effigy):
Transformed into the syllable HŪM, and so purified.
This dissolves into the expanse,
And then blazing forth as the symbolic seal.
It becomes the buddha-body.
Brilliant through the proliferation
Of its rays of light.
Then he meditates that (the evil one) has become triumphant
On the crown of the head. [12]

This is the wondrous skillful means.
Which releases beings from evil existences. [13]

The primordial uncreated real nature
Appears as a magical apparition.
In the manner of an optical illusion.
Although all rites of sexual union and "liberation" have been
performed.

They have not been performed, even to the extent of an atomic particle.
[14]

The world, its contents, and the mind-stream
Are realised to be pure.
Through the two samenesses
And the two superior samenesses
The maṇḍala is the field of Samantabhadra. [15]

Conduct is transformed through the two great provisions.
And then the yogin who has not degenerated
In the branches (of mantra).
Who possesses the requisites.
And completely knows the rituals.
Will, by means of the maṇḍala of feast offerings,
Certainly accomplish his excellent purpose. [16]

One should meditate on the form
Of the deities of the five clusters.
Arrayed five in union with five.
And on the ten wrathful male deities.
And the ten wrathful female deities.
In the manner of a circle. [17]

One should meditate on the deities of the three clusters.
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind.
Namely those of the enlightened family of the Tathāgata.
Of the enlightened family of Indestructible reality.
And of the enlightened family of the lotus;
Which have a host of wrathful deities. [18]

One should meditate on the deities of a single cluster,
Namely the enlightened family among enlightened families.
Where the central deity of the enlightened families

Is the mind of buddha-mind, the supreme Buddha-mind;
And which has a host of wrathful deities. [19]

Through the assembled hosts which include
The great assembly of male wrathful deities
And female wrathful deities.
With those of their intermediaries,
Retainers, attendants, and other servants.
The rites and accomplishment are perfected. [20]

The Yogin or Mantrin, [21] in terms of accomplishment.
Abides in a disposition of spontaneous sameness and perfection;
And through conduct, unimpeded in all respects,
All things are primordial and indivisible.
All maṇḍalas are within the enlightened family
Of Indestructible reality.
The Yogin should excellently meditate
That they emanate light and blaze forth.
And this should be dissolved without attachment.
Transformed, without duality.
That one obtains the great seal. [22]

Alternatively, the Yogin (should attain) the nature
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind—
All (Buddhas) without exception
Are Buddha-body, speech and mind.
In contemplation, they emanate rays of light
Which radiate and blaze forth,
And which are dissolved in the disposition
Of the non-dual expanse.
Then the supreme accomplishment of
The awareness-holder will be obtained.
All maṇḍalas without exception will blaze forth.
The suffering of conflicting emotions will be dispelled,
And (beings) will be born into the enlightened family
Of indestructible reality. [23]

For genuine accomplishment, the Mantrin
Should meditate without attachment
On skillful means and discriminative awareness,
And by all means upon the five maṇḍalas
And the row of wrathful deities.
These should be dissolved without dichotomy.
And the nucleus of supreme accomplishment will be achieved. [24]

The yogin, by means of skillful means
And discriminative awareness,
Should meditate on the Tathāgatas
And their female consorts;
And he should meditate on the nature of
The male and female spiritual warriors.
These emanate a multitude of light-rays. [25]

Their respective mantras, seals
And contemplations radiate
Genuinely and differently. [26]

One who is well endowed
With the locations and enjoyments,
Whichever are pleasing,
And an intellect without degeneration,
Should firstly act as if taking a vow.
And when propitiation has been performed,
Without laziness and langour,
And without hesitation.
That (Yogin) will accomplish all maṇḍalas,
And obtain the supreme, genuine,
Secret of indestructible reality. [27]

The days and dates for attainment
Are explained according to
Their description in the tantras. [28]

—Such were his words of indestructible reality. With these words, the Tathāgata held meaningful discourse with the Tathāgata himself. This completes the eleventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Maṇḍala of the Feast Offerings. [29]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.1]

Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, became equipoised in the contemplation called "the king or transformation of the Magical Net", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa dgyes-pa chen-pos sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i rgyal-
po bsgyur-ba zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas / ched-
du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (379.1-419.6):]

The second aspect (of the spontaneously present maṇḍala of peaceful deities—see p. 543) is a teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path (Chs. 11-13). It has two parts, namely, the stage of creation which reverses common attachments (Chs. 11-12), and the stage of perfection which penetrates the essential meaning (Ch. 13). The first of these comprises both the maṇḍala of feast offerings according to the creation

stage of skillful means (Ch. 11), and an exegesis of its particular branches (Ch. 12).

The former (is the subject-matter of this chapter). It has three subdivisions, namely: the background motivation: an exegesis of the meaning of its words: and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 11.1):]

Once empowerment in the maṇḍala of the ground had been conferred, then (de-nas), in order to take into the path the apparitional objects of skillful means according to the creation stage, "the tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Samantabhadra himself, who is known as the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-po) because he delights in skillful means, and who comprises both the male and female consorts, became equipoised (snyoms-par zhugs) in the (la) genuine contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin). This is a great coalescence in primordial reality, without dichotomy between acceptance and rejection or refutation and proof. Therein, the Magical (sgyu-'phrul) apparitions of skillful means, which manifest as the conflicting or defiled phenomena of saṃsāra including the five desired attributes, have the nature of a Net (dra-ba) because they inherently abide as discriminative awareness or emptiness. This is called the (zhes-bya-ba) abiding nature or king (rgyal-po) of all things because it is primordial Buddha-hood, or else it is called (zhes-bya-ba'i) the powerful transformation (bsgyur) into great pristine cognition of the desired attributes and conflicting emotions, which are to be known without being renounced, and from the very moment at which they manifest.[1] And then (nas), Samantabhadra uttered (brdod-do) this ('di) following meaningful expression (ched-du brjod-pa), which reveals all things as the path to liberation.

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (380.1-419.1):]

The second subdivision (of this chapter) comprises both the maṇḍala of the spontaneous ground which is to be known, and the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path which are to be experientially cultivated.

[Mandala of the Spontaneous Ground which is to be Known (380.1-384.1):]

[This (comments on Ch. 11.2):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For a further explanation of the term "Magical Net" (sgyu-'phrul), see above, p. 582. The recognition of this abiding nature (gnas-lugs), from the moment when it arises as the phenomena of saṃsāra, is said, in the rNying-ma view, to be enlightenment. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b on the non-recognition of this nature, and on its recognition, *ibid.*.

Text 11.2 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.2]

The single basis and the manner of seed-syllables.

The blessing and the direct perception:

Through (these) four kinds of excellent realisation.

All things are the great king, manifestly perfect. [2]

[Tibetan]

rgyu gcig-pa-dang yi- 'bru'i tshul /
byin-gyis brlabs-dang mngon-sum-par /
rab-tu rtogs-pa nam-bzhi-yis /
thams-cad mngon-rdzogs rgyal-po-che / [2]

Commentary:

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (380.1-419.1):]

The second subdivision (of this chapter) comprises both the maṇḍala of the spontaneous ground which is to be known, and the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path which are to be experientially cultivated.

[Mandala of the Spontaneous Ground which is to be Known (380.1-384.1):]

[This (comments on Ch. 11.2):]

The single basis (rgyu gcig-pa) means that all things subsumed within apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, emerge from the disposition of primordial emptiness.

It says in the Sūtra of King of contemplation (T. 127):

Just as when swirls of cloud Instantly appear
From a sky which has no trace of clouds.
And, having emerged, disintegrate,
So that there are no swirls of cloud.
One should examine whence they originate,
One should know all things in their entirety to be likewise.

All things have not only emerged at the outset from that disposition of emptiness. Indeed, the naturally uncreated essence abides from this very moment at which they appear, without a duality of appearance and emptiness, in the manner of the seedsyllables (dang yig-'bru'i tshul).

The Sūtra Requested By Devaputra (Devaputrapariṣcchāsūtra. T. 161) says:

All things abide in the manner of the naturally pure syllable A.

Now, appearances abide in the nature of the syllable OM, emptiness abides in the nature of the syllable ĀH, and their nonduality abides in the nature of the syllable HŪM. Therefore, things are empty while they appear, and appear while they are empty. There is no dichotomy between appearance and emptiness.

It says in the Root Stanzas Madhyamaka entitled Discriminative Awareness (T. 3824):

Creation, abiding, and similarly destruction.
Are said to resemble dreams.
Magical displays, and castles in the sky.

And:

For this reason, there is nothing but emptiness.

Just as the nature of fire is blessed with heat. all things naturally have the blessing (byin-gyis brlabs-dang) of Buddha-hood in the nature of the primordial maṇḍala; and they abide in a completely pure manner, without Impurity.

It says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-rgyud);

All things are pure.
Blessed in the primordial maṇḍala.

Now, the natures of the empty Buddha-body of reality, the apparitional buddha-body of perfect rapture, and the emanational body which is diversified in its appearance are such that all forms abide as the maṇḍala of buddha-body, all sounds abide as the maṇḍala of buddha-speech, and all reality abides as the maṇḍala of buddha-mind.

Furthermore, the natures which abide in that manner are not covert and they do not exist in an extraneous temporal dimension. Indeed, from this very moment of their appearance they are visible in direct perception (mngon-sum-par) as the essence through which external phenomena abide in the nature of the female consort, internal components in the nature of the male consort, and the aggregate of thought in the nature of the deity. From the very moment of their appearance, they reveal an intention which does not stray from the disposition of sameness.

It says accordingly in the All Accomplishing King (T. 828):[1]

Derived from enlightened mind, the basis of all.
The five great elements which are the substance of mind
Emerge as the five teachers or enlightened mind.

Their body is the Buddha-body of perfect rapture.
As for doctrines, they expound those
In accordance with their own essence.
As for teaching, their own nature is revealed.
These teachers, the buddha-body of perfect rapture,
Have an intention which does not conceive of itself.
And nor does it conceive of other phenomena either—
These five teachers of enlightened mind
Accordingly reveal all things to be reality.

In this way, the presence of the pristine cognitions is revealed by the five poisons, the five Buddha-bodies are revealed by the mind, and the five female consorts are revealed by the five elements. Clearer even than one's own face or its reflection, the Individual characteristics of all things actually are revealed as the reality of Buddha-hood: while their apparent reality is visible but is not (dualistically) recognised.[2]

The abiding nature of the genuine ground, which abides in that way, is consecrated by one's own merits and the spirituality of a genuine guru. Consequently, through these four kinds of excellent realisation (rab-tu rtogs-pa rnam-bzhi-yis) all things (thams-cad) are incontrovertibly realised to be the great king (rgyal-po-che) of primordial, manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs) enlightenment.[3] At that time, the abiding nature of most secret meaning is found because the things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, arise as the display of pristine cognition. in and common equilibrium (phyam-gcig). That is the explanation (of these verses) in terms of the real nature of the expanse.[4]

(When this passage is explained) according to the creation stage: all things are known through these four kinds of excellent realisation—The single basis refers to the three kinds of contemplation, the manner of seed syllables to the visual creation of the nucleus of the different deities, the blessing to the visual creation of the maṇḍala of the deities, and direct perception to spontaneously perfect meditation in that disposition.

Then, when combined with the perfection stage: the single basis refers to the unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in the mind, the manner of the seed-syllables refers to realisation in the uncreated disposition, the blessing to the transformation of such meditative absorptions indivisibly into the essence of indestructible buddha-mind, and direct perception to realisation derived from meditating by means of the pristine cognition of one's own particular awareness.

It says accordingly in the Sequence of the Path (p. 4736):

The view dependent on study and thought is concluded
By one who is assuredly confident.
Because, like a reflection on a clear ocean.
He does not engage the mind in verbalisation.
He is without objective referent
In the direct perception of his own awareness,
And is naturally radiant, and unswerving,
Without the threefold interaction.[5]

Then, (when the same verses are explained) according to the coalescence (of the two stages):[6] the single basis refers to the unity of creation and perfection, and of the two truths; their essence abides in the cloud-mass of syllables beyond eternalism and nihilism; from the naturally pure disposition of the expanse these (syllables) are blessed or consecrated to manifest in and of themselves as the creation and perfection (stages); and having realised this reality through awareness in a decisive and noncontradictory manner, one perseveres (to maintain it) by day and night.

It says accordingly in the Flash Splendour (T. 830):

According to the inner Yoga.

Realisation also is claimed to be of four kinds:

Through the single basis, the manner of seed-syllables.

The blessing and direct perception.

The meaning of the Great Perfection is introduced.

The basis refers to the two truths

Which, in an immediate manner.

Are characterised as a single (essence)

Because they are of a single (emptiness).[7]

In the maṇḍala of Buddha-body, speech and mind

All things are naturally realised.

From the blessing of the uncreated expanse.

All things are known to appear.

When such a nature is determined.

Without extraneous dependence or wavering.

Through the awareness of direct perception.

One has arrived at the level of Yoga.

According to passages such as these. It is Improper even to suggest that a single (interpretation) is alone valid, because the verses of indestructible reality (vajrapādas) are profound and may be applied in any context whatsoever.

[Mandalas of Skillful Means and Discriminative Awareness of the Path which are to be Experientially Cultivated (384.1-419.1):]

The latter (see p. 890) concerns the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path, which is experientially cultivated. It has three parts, namely: the maṇḍala in which all that appears is pristine cognition; the maṇḍala of the displayed feast offerings; and the branches of its means for attainment.

[Maṇḍala in which All that Appears is Pristine Cognition (384.2-402.1):]

The first comprises both a general teaching on the maṇḍala in which appearances and mind are indivisible, and a particular exegesis on the maṇḍala in which the paths of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible.

The former (384.3-386.1) has three aspects, namely the maṇḍala of the male consort who is the apprehending subject, the maṇḍala of the female consort who is the apprehended object, and the maṇḍala of their indivisible display.

[i. The first of these (comments on Ch. 11.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This quotation is interpreted according to the oral exegesis of Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che. On the term "great element" (mahābhūta) and its identification with skandha, see also below, pp. 1001-1002. The "five teachers" (ston-pa lnga) are, of course, the five conquerors, Vairocana etc.

[2]:

On the distinction between "reality" (chos-nyid) or "emptiness" (stong-pa-nyid) and "apparent reality" (chos-can) or "phenomenal appearances" (snang-ba). see above. Ch. 4, note 31.

[3]:

On these axioms of Mahāyoga, known as the "four kinds of excellent realisation," (viz. rgyu gcig-pa, yig-'bru'i tshul, byin-gyis brlabs, and mngon-sum-pa). see also above, pp. 116, 172, note 201; also H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery, p. 13.

[4]:

The "real nature of the expanse" (de-bzhin-nyid) indicates the explanation according to the ground, in contrast to those of the path in its utpattikrama and sampannakrama aspects which follow.

[5]:

Tibetan gsum-bral indicates freedom from the dichotomy of subject, object and their interaction.

[6]:

The "coalescence of the two stages" (rim-gnyis-kyi zung-'jug) refers to rdzogs-pa chen-po, and is most commonly implied in the phrase bskyed-rdzogs gsum, where gsum refers either to the coalescence of the two stages or to the second stage of the perfection stage. See e.g.. NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 184b-185a.

[7]:

Tibetan gcig-pas gcig-pa'i mtshan-nyid-dang. The translation of this verse follows the interpretation of Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che.

Text 11.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.3]

The limbs, sense-organs, and consciousness.

All are to be known on maturation as the syllable OM.

One meditates on them as the nature

Of the perfect maṇḍala.

Alternatively, one meditates on these

As the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. [3]

[Tibetan]

yan-lag dbang-po rnam-shes kun /

rnam-smin om-du shes-par bya /

rdzogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-nyid-du bsgom /

yang-na khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor bsgom / [3]

Commentary:

[Mandalas of Skillful Means and Discriminative Awareness of the Path which are to be Experientially Cultivated (384.1-419.1):]

The latter (see p. 890) concerns the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness according to the path, which is experientially cultivated. It has three parts, namely: the maṇḍala in which all that appears is pristine cognition; the maṇḍala of the displayed feast offerings; and the branches of its means for attainment.

[Maṇḍala in which All that Appears is Pristine Cognition (384.2-402.1):]

The first comprises both a general teaching on the maṇḍala in which appearances and mind are indivisible, and a particular exegesis on the maṇḍala in which the paths of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible.

The former (384.3-386.1) has three aspects, namely the maṇḍala of the male consort who is the apprehending subject, the maṇḍala of the female consort who is the apprehended object, and the maṇḍala of their indivisible display.

[i. The first of these (comments on Ch. 11.3):]

There are two parts, of which (the first) concerns that which is to be known as the maṇḍala of peaceful deities. The five limbs (yan-lag) of the body, the sense-organs (dbang-po) including the eyes, and the aggregates of consciousness (rnam-shes) associated with them, are all (kun) ordinary

forms which, on maturation (rnam-smin) of their individual characteristics, are to be known as (shes-par-bya) the syllable OM, the nature of the five pristine cognitions. To illustrate this, one meditates on them (bsgom) as the nature of the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor nyid-du) of perfect (rdzogs) rapture, i.e., that of the five enlightened families who appear without inherent existence in the manner of the reflection on a mirror, and who are naturally expressed as the five male consorts, the eight male spiritual warriors, the four male gatekeepers, and the six sages.

Then, concerning that which is to be known as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities: Alternatively (yang-na), in accordance with the acumen of those to be trained or by one's own volition, one should meditate (bsgom) on all these components, sense-organs, and consciousnesses as the essence of the five pristine cognitions in the maṇḍala of (-i dkyil-'khor) the extremely wrathful deities (khro-bo).[1]

[ii. The second aspect (of the general teaching in which the maṇḍala of appearances and mind are indivisible) concerns the maṇḍala of the female consort. (It comments on Ch. 11.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The procedures connected with the wrathful maṇḍala are explained below, Chs. 15-21.

Text 11.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.4]

Forms, sounds, scents, savours, contacts and so forth

Are to be known on maturation as the syllable MŪM.

One meditates on them as the maṇḍala of female consorts.

Alternatively, one meditates on them

As the maṇḍala of female wrathful deities. [4]

[Tibetan]

gzugs-sgra dri ro reg la-sogs /

rnam-smin mūṃ-du shes-par bya /

yum-gyi dkyil-'khor nyid-du bsgom /

yang-na khro-mo'i dkyil-'khor bsgom / [4]

Commentary:

[ii. The second aspect (of the general teaching in which the maṇḍala of appearances and mind are indivisible) concerns the maṇḍala of the female

consort.]

[(It comments on Ch. 11.4):]

Here there are also two parts, of which the former concerns that which is to be known as the female consorts of the peaceful deities. All the forms (gzugs) subsumed by the living beings of phenomenal existence. and internal phenomena Including sounds, scents, savours, contacts and so forth (sgra-dri-ro-reg la-sogs), and all appearances of the five elements are to be known (shes-par-bya) on saturation (rnam-smin) as (du) the syllable MŪṂ, the essential nature of non-dual pristine cognition. To Illustrate this, one should meditate on them (bsgom) as the nature of the maṇḍala of female consorts (yum-gyi dkyil-'khor nyid-du), who appear but are not (dualistically) recognised, i.e.. the forms of the four female gatekeepers, the eight female spiritual warriors, and the five female consorts.

The latter concerns the visualisation of the female consorts of the wrathful deities. Alternatively (yang-na), one meditates on them as the maṇḍala of female wrathful deities (khro-mo'i dkyil-'khor bsgom) depending on the status of those to be trained or on one's own volition.

[iii. The third aspect (of the general teaching on the maṇḍala in which appearances and mind are indivisible) is the maṇḍala of their indivisible display.]

[(It comments on Ch. 11.5):]

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Text 11.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.5]

The raiment, ornaments, food and drink, songs.
Verses, dance steps and gesticulations.
And the cloud-mass of feast-offerings
Are known as the syllable HŪṂ.
So when these have been well enjoyed,
It is pleasing to the maṇḍala of wondrous source. [5]

[Tibetan]

gos-rgyan bza'-btung glu-dang tshig /
bro-gar tshogs-kyi sprin-phung-la /
hūṃ-du shes-pas rab-spyad-na /
ngo-mtshar 'byung-ba'i dkyil-'khor mnyes / [5]

Commentary:

[iii. The third aspect (of the general teaching on the maṇḍala in which appearances and mind are indivisible) is the maṇḍala of their indivisible display.]

[(It comments on Ch. 11.5):]

The raiment (gos) which covers the body, the ornaments (rgyan) which are fastened to it, the food and drink (bza'-btung), the vocal songs (glu), the expressive verses (tshigs), the configurations of the body—dance steps (bro) of the feet and gesticulations (gar) of the hands—and the great cloud-mass of (-kyi sprin-phung-la) all the feast offerings (tshogs) of enjoyable requisites, whichever are employed, are not ordinary appearances, but they are known as (-du shes) the syllable HŪM, the nature of appearance and emptiness, or male and female consort without duality, which is the reality of non-dual supreme bliss. So (-bas) when (-na), without attachment, these requisites of the feast offerings have been well enjoyed (rab-spyad) as the nature of the six (offering) goddesses,[1] in a dream-like disposition without inherent existence, the result is pleasing (mnyes) to all buddhas present as components, sensory bases and activity fields in the maṇḍala (dkyil-khor) which is (ba'i) the natural source ('byung-ba'i) of wondrous (ngo-mtshar) supreme and common accomplishments. Consequently, the most bounteous of beneficial attributes,—the swift accomplishment of enlightenment is obtained.

[Mandala in which the Paths of Sexual Union and "Liberation" are Without Duality (386.2-402.1):]

The maṇḍala in which the paths of sexual union and "liberation" are without duality has three aspects, namely: the maṇḍala of great bliss or supreme enlightenment in which sexual union is inherently pure; the maṇḍala of the secret skillful means in which "liberation" is inherently pure; and the maṇḍala of magical pristine cognition for one who is untainted with respect to sexual union and "liberation".

The first Includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview of the Rites of Sexual Union (386.3-394.6):]

This has two sections: the classification of the supporting seal or female partner (mudrā), and the nature of the supported pristine cognition. The former comprises both a general teaching and a particular exegesis.

In general, there are three kinds (of mudrā): The twelve year-old girl whose secret centre is an eight-petalled lotus is a devī because she fills both male and female consorts with bliss.

As the Tantra Mañjuśrī (T. 543) says:

She possesses twelve aspects of genuine meaning.

The sixteen year-old girl who has a four petalled lotus is a nāgini because she confers bliss on the male consort:

She is the awareness with sixteen aspects.

And the twenty year-old girl who has a two-petalled lotus is of an inferior genus because she confers bliss on the female consort.[2]

As (the same text) says:

She is enlightened in twenty ways.

Thus, (the *mudrās*) aged between twelve and fifteen are *devīs*, those aged between sixteen and nineteen are *nāgnīs* and those over twenty are subsumed by (beings of) inferior species. In addition, all of them should be beautiful in form, and most desirous. They should not befriend another, and they should be able to maintain secrecy. They should be learned in the skillful means of sexual union, and great in discriminative awareness. They should have respect and great affection for their respective accomplished masters; they should have faith, perseverance, and compassion, and they should possess the extraordinary energy channel of bliss.[3] In association with these three kinds of female consort who are the female consorts respectively of buddha-mind, buddha-speech, and buddha-body, accomplishment will swiftly be obtained.

In this context, there are some who hold that *giris* belonging to the race of the *devīs* or of *nāgas* are actually summoned. There are some who hold that these are divided into the three categories of the beautiful, the ugly, and the mediocre; and there are those who hold them to be divided according to the three categories of action seal, seal of pristine cognition, and great seal. However, this does not seem to be the intention of the present text. Those (opinions) are respectively untenable because (*mudrās* of these races) do not become objects that are adhered to and possessed by all *Yogins*, because the bliss derived from an ugly partner would be inappropriate, and because the sequence of sexual union is said to depend on the actual (physical) support of the ritual action seal (*karmamudrā*).[4]

The latter is the particular exegesis, according to which there are six kinds (of female partners), namely, the "lotus" girl, the "conch" girl, the "marked" girl, the "doe" girl, the "elephant" girl, and the "diverse" girl.[5]

Among them the first is of three kinds: The best kind of "lotus" girl has a body which is not too tall or short, her figure is neither angular nor flat, her complexion is neither greenish nor yellowish, but beautiful, pink, and attractive: she has seventy-15 two more energy channels than the male; her hair is fair and curling; on her body there is the scent of sandalwood, and from her mouth wafts the fragrance of the night-lotus; her body is full and yet her waist is slim; her hands and feet are bird-like, red and slender; her rounded lips are somewhat large, and her lips have lotus markings; her teeth are excellent, (visible) through the lips and close-fitting; her navel is deep and marked with lotuses, while (her feet) make lotus impressions on the ground; below her navel are three markings in the shape of the syllable E; on the spot between her eyebrows there are three upright marks; on her hairline and temples there are markings like a silken headdress; on her tongue there is a sword-like mark; on her shoulders or shoulder-blades there are markings like a twisting *svāstika*; her breasts are small and

prominent; her vagina is tight, hairless, fleshy, and high like the back of a tortoise; her behaviour is pleasant and hard to feign; her very sight generates bliss; by listening to her voice or by her touch, thoughts are transformed into non-conceptual pristine cognition, and the contemplation of bliss increases dispositionally. It is auspicious merely to be in the vicinity of one who is so endowed and the bliss of the Yogin becomes extensive. If one has a relationship with her, the supreme rank (of accomplishment) will certainly be obtained.

The mediocre kind of "lotus" girl is white-skinned and of highly domesticated background. Her limbs are coarse, her behaviour is unrefined, and she is slow in temperament. Learned in worldly activities. she gives birth to sons; she cannot be deceived by others, and is affectionate. If one has a relationship with her, the result will be obtained within a matter of years.

The inferior kind of "lotus" girl is fair-complexioned and of good figure, but spiteful; she is superficial, and she strives to sweep (the house) clean; she is open-mouthed and unable to keep secrets: her eyes are narrow and the hairs proliferate on her face. Do not adhere to her, for she is called "deceitful white eyes" (dkar-mo mig sgyu-ma).

The "lotus" girl is the female consort of Samantabhadra, the supreme pristine cognition.[6]

Secondly, there are three kinds of "conch" girl: The best is of shining complexion, the tips of her hair curling; her flesh is yellowish and her veins red; her behaviour is skillful, and she has an excellent sedentary posture; slow in speech, she looks obliquely; she has great discriminative awareness and understands through a mere intimation; she suffers acutely and has coarse thoughts; the flesh of her body is plump, pliant, and soft; her voice is clear and loud like a blown conch shell; and on her navel there is the mark of a conch curling to the right. If one has a relationship with her, the supreme rank (of accomplishment) will be obtained in this very lifetime.

The mediocre kind of "conch" girl seems to be hunched when regarded from behind, and she seems to stoop when regarded from the front: her body is beautiful with few masculine features (rngom); her bosom is hunched but her chin is fine; her figure is small in height but broad; she performs all kinds of trifling activity in the house: and after cohabiting with her. she is greatly afflicted by attachment of the heart and loving kindness. If one has a relationship with her, accomplishments will be achieved within years and months.

The inferior kind of "conch" girl has yellowish flesh and large eyes; she has keen intelligence and clear recollection; she is restless and likes to travel; her hands are agitated and she is hyperactive; she is ill-mannered and not strict in her resolutions (i.e. she gossips); she keeps her eyes on men, and she is exceedingly jealous. One should not adhere to her because she is inauspicious.

The "conch" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of the

The third is the "marked" girl who is of three kinds: The best is greenish (in hue), with elongated figure and long limbs; her rounded lips are large, and the flesh of her body is plump; from her chin to her vagina (lotus) there are few wrinkles; her eyes are long and fine; her teeth are neither long nor short, but even-sized; on her figure and body there are little moles, and her voice is sweet; she is passive, very slow, and gentle in her behaviour; her form is noble and she is skilled in politeness; her shape is symmetrical (phyed), and on her brow there are three upright markings; she has experience in and familiarity with divine laws and human laws; and at her hairline she has one or three marks which resemble a sealed skull. If one has a relationship with her, one will possess rapture and swiftly obtain accomplishment.

The mediocre "marked" girl has, in addition to these signs, great faith and discriminative awareness; she can keep secrets and has attachment of the heart. The inferior type is dark-skinned and fair-browed; her eyes are small and deep-set; she is loosemouthed and talkative; she is great in defilements and cannot keep secrets. Do not adhere to her.

The "marked" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of precious gems.

The fourth is the "doe" girl: Her body resembles that of a doe; she is corpulent and has large breasts; the flesh of the lower part of her body is plump and her vagina is tight; her breath and womb have the fragrance of musk; her waist is slim, and her gait slow; she regards people without closing her eyes, and her voice is sweet. If one has a relationship with her accomplishment will swiftly be obtained. The mediocre kind is beautiful in form, and sweet-voiced; she is respectful and can keep secrets. The inferior type is the reverse of these and one should not adhere to her.

The "doe" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of indestructible reality.

The fifth is the "elephant" girl: The best sort has long eyes, and the space between her eyebrows is wide; her body is not tall and she is slow in temperament; she does not heed the words of others, and she is small-minded; she has large ears and little shame; she knows what is proper and improper in conduct, and she is fond of relaxation; she is most domineering in speech and very industrious; she has a delicious smell and short limbs. One who frequents her will swiftly obtain accomplishment.

The mediocre sort is greenish in complexion and lofty in height; her body is domesticated and of great strength; she is not distracted from her purpose and cannot be deceived; she is great in self-assurance (mdo) and very liberal (spro ring-ba). One should adhere to her because she is endowed with glorious signs.

The inferior type is fickle and talkative; great in deception and prone to anger; she is facile both in her likes and dislikes; she has great attachment and does not appreciate liberality. One should not adhere to her because

she is said to be "worth a useless horse" (bre-mo ri-ma).

The "elephant" girl is the female consort of the enlightened family of the lotus.

The sixth is the "diverse" girl: The best kind is beautiful in form, and with slender waist; she has a sweet voice and can keep secrets; her flesh is clear, radiant, and deeply lustrous; she is somewhat small, and has curling hair; her salt is rapid, and her talk energetic; she is skilled in assigning chores and very strong; on her brow there is a wrinkle which resembles a crossed-vajra. If one has a relationship with her, accomplishments are at hand.

The mediocre kind in addition to these (qualities) knows faith and modesty, and it is clear that she is small in stature. The inferior kind is the reverse of these; she strides impulsively; her flesh is rough and her limbs coarse; she is great in deception and prone to anger; she is talkative and laughs extensively; she is ugly to behold and of frightful appearance; she has little shame and enjoys fighting; she has disagreements with everyone and is unpleasant. One should not adhere to her because she is inauspicious.

The girl of "diverse" type is the female consort of the enlightened family of activity.

These signs are clear (in girls) under the age of twenty, and thereafter they become somewhat unclear. The worthy female partner or *mudrā* is particularly sublime in ways such as these.

It says in the *Mahāmāya Tantra* (T. 425):

Among all magical apparitions,
The magical apparition of womanhood
Is particularly sublime.

One should search for a *mudrā* who is endowed with such signs. Then her mind should be trained and purified, beginning with the lay-vows and continuing as far as the secret empowerment; and she then becomes a suitable assistant for one's desired means for attainment (*sādhana*).

The *Hevajra Tantra* (T. 417-8) concurs with the words:[7]

First you should grant the *poṣaḍa* vow;
Followed by the ten topics of training.

ii. The second section (In the overview of the *maṇḍala* of great bliss or supreme enlightenment in which sexual union is inherently pure) concerns the sequence of the supported pristine cognition.[8] It has three aspects, namely, the preliminary ritual service which is to be performed; the application of the rites of attainment and great attainment; and the classification of pristine cognition according to the actual foundation (*dnogs-gzhi*).[9]

According to the first of these (the preliminaries), one whose own vital energy and mind are appropriate should relax for some days, eat substances containing the essential minerals, perform massage (bskum-nye), and extend the energy channels of the body with bliss by means of conversation, glancing, laughing and so forth, which incite desire. Then, according to the second, on a comfortable seat one radiantly visualises (oneself and the mudrā) as the male and female consorts in their maṇḍala of deities, and consecrates the respective secret centres as a vajra and a lotus. On the tip of the latter, the maṇḍala of the Buddhas is visually created and invited. Then, the rite of attainment activates the seminal fluid or "enlightened mind" by embracing, kissins, scratchins with the fingernails, rubbins the breasts, and so forth. Then, enterins into union, the rite of great attainment is effected. This refers to the non-dual display of the male and female consorts.

According to the third (the classification of pristine cognition in the actual foundation): At that time, when the pure-essence (of seminal fluid) moves from the crown-centre to the throat centre, there is the pristine cognition of delight; then, there is the pristine cognition of supreme delight when it descends from the throat centre to the heart-centre; there is the pristine cognition absent of delight when it descends from the heart centre to the navel centre; there is the pristine cognition of coemergent delight when it descends from the navel centre to the secret centre; and there is the inconceivable pristine cognition, in which all conceptual elaborations of the subject-object dichotomy are quiescent. This is the great bliss, granting the supreme offering of joy and equanimity.

For it is said:[10]

The supreme offering, great desire.
Delights all sentient beings.

Then the white and red seminal fluids are drawn in through the pathway of the vajra (penis), whence they fill the four centres and their petals from the navel as far as the crown. in this way they are visualised to be extended with unceasing bliss and pervaded with pristine cognition free from all conceptual elaborations.

As is said (Ch. 11.9):

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids.
Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the maṇḍala.

Then in the energy channels, these (pure-essences) are arranged by means of the three essentials, namely, yogic exercises ('khrul-'khor), visualisation and non-visualisation; and they are determined in a natural disposition free from conceptual elaboration. This is the genuine pristine cognition of reality, the intention of Samantabhadra.[11]

Now, the first (of those) pristine cognitions is the mirror-like pristine cognition in which thoughts of hatred become blissfully radiant without independent existence because they are inherently pure. The second is the pristine cognition of sameness because the proud mind is purified and the

male and female consorts are without duality. The third is the pristine cognition of discernment in which the nature of bliss is known to be emptiness because subjective thoughts of coarse desire have disappeared. The fourth is the pristine cognition of accomplishment because envy is purified and the activities of bliss and emptiness are concluded. Then, at the conclusion of the four delights of the supported (pristine cognitions) in their upward momentum, there is the pristine cognition of reality's expanse, non-conceptual in all respects. All (aspects of) sexual union are purified as pristine cognition, and the four pristine cognitions are purified in the expanse of reality. This is applied in five natural steps, namely, the deity dissolves into the seed-syllable, the seed-syllable dissolves into its vibration, the vibration dissolves into its superscript point, and that dissolves into the expanse of reality.[12] in this way the intention of the male and female consort Samantabhadra, where expanse and pristine cognition are without duality, is concluded.

In Chapter Thirteen (of the Secret Nucleus, 13.9) this point is also made:

Through the display of the pristine cognition of bliss
When the essential seminal points are united.
Offerings are made to joyous pristine cognition.

[Interlinear Commentary on the Rites of Sexual Union (394.6-396.6)]

The interlinear commentary on the maṇḍala of great bliss or supreme enlightenment, in which sexual union is inherently pure, has five sections.

[i. The first concerns the object (or female partner) with whom one enters into sexual union. (It comments on Ch. 11.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The six offering goddesses (mchod-pa'i lha-mo drug) are those embodying the raptures of the six senses, Lāsyā and so forth.

[2]:

Tibetan rnam-pa nyi-shu byang-chub-pa. On this verse, which is interpreted esoterically in accordance with the causal vehicles to mean the emptiness of the four extremes (existence, non-existence, their conjunction and disjunction) as applied to each of the pañcaskandha, or to indicate the reaching and refinement of the ten bodhisattva levels, and esoterically according to the resultant vehicles to mean twenty kinds of yogic exercise, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, p. 20, note.

[3]:

Tibetan bde-ba'i rtsa khyad-par-can. This is a requisite for the practices outlined below, pp. 908-914, 1006ff.

[4]:

I.e. most Yogins who engage in such practices would have a human consort, generating bliss through her beauty, who is by definition a karmamudrā. On the distinction between the latter whereby kāmadhātu is mastered and the jñānamudrā whereby rūpadhātu is mastered, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, PP. 175ff.; also see F. Lessing and A. Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, pp.319-323. where the distinction is made on the basis of whether or not the consort is concretely present.

[5]:

Tibetan padma-can (Padminī), dung-can-ma (Śaṅkhinī), ri-mo-can (Varṇinī), ri-dyags-can-ma (Mṛginī), glang-po-can-ma (Hastinī), and sna-tshogs-can-ma (Citriṇī), See also H.V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching Nāropa*. p. 77 for sources pertaining to these in the bKa'-brgyud tradition.

[6]:

Just as the padma-can is held to be the consort of Samantabhadra, so the dung-can-ma is that of the tathāgatakula, the ri-mo-can is that of the ratnakula, the ri-dyags-can-ma is that of the vajrakula, the glang-po-can-ma is that of the padmakula, and the sna-tshogs-can-ma is that of the karmakula. See below, pp. 903ff.

[7]:

Hevajra Tantra, Pt. 2, ch. viii, v. 9-10d. See also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. P. 758.

[8]:

Tibetan brten-pa'i ye-shes, i.e. the inner experiences of delight associated with the supporting mudrā or female consort.

[9]:

On ritual service (sevā), and the rites of attainment & great attainment (sādhana and mahāsādhana). see above, p. 176, note 218. The term dngos-gzhi indicates the main part of the practice.

[10]:

N.L. dga'-ba'i ye-shes bzhi-ni: dga'-ba'i ye-shes, mchog-dga'i ye-shes. dga'-bral ye-shes, lhan-dga'i ye-shes. See also below. Ch. 13, pp. 1006ff.

[11]:

Tibetan 'khrul-'khor-dang dmigs-pa-dang dmigs-med-pa'i gnad-gsum. The Yogic exercises are described in many traditions or cycles of the rNying-ma school, the best known of which at the present day being

probably the rig-'dzin brgyad-kyi 'khrul-'khor from the gter-ma cycle of 'Jigs-med gLing-pa. See e.g.. 'Jigs-med gLing-pa, klong-chen snying-thig rsta-pod, Vol. 3. rig-'dzin 'khrul-'khor sbas-don gsal-ba. pp. 36-51.

[12]:

On the five parts of a seed-syllable. see above Ch. 4, pp. 592. note 38.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.6]

Discriminating between Devīs, Nāginīs,
And female (mudrās) of Inferior species.
Or else without discrimination, [6]

[Tibetan]

lha-mo klu-mo rigs ngan-mo /
dbye'am yang-na mi-dbye-bar / [6]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary on the Rites of Sexual Union (394.6-396.6)]

The interlinear commentary on the maṇḍala of sreat bliss or supreme enlightenment, in which sexual union is inherently pure, has five sections.

[i. The first concerns the object (or female partner) with whom one enters into sexual union. (It comments on Ch. 11.6):]

Discriminating between (dbye) the good and bad qualities and the different particular qualities of devīs (lha-mo), who are the twelve-year old secret consorts of Buddha-mind, Nāginīs (klu-mo) who are the sixteen year old secret consorts of Buddha-speech, and female (mudrās) of Inferior species (rigs-ngan-mo) who are the twenty-year old secret consorts of Buddha-body, one should reject those who are bad and adhere to those who are good; or else (ma yang-na) without discrimination (mi-dbye-par), one should resort to whichever object (or female partner) is appropriate.
[1]

[ii. The second, concerning the manner in which one sexually unites (with her, comments on Ch. 11.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For an example of those who do not require such discrimination. see the life of Hūmkara in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 103-106. On the attributes of diverse female partners and the enlightened families (kula) to which they belong, see above, pp. 900-907.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.7]

There are ritual service, further ritual service.

Rites of attainment, and rites of great attainment. [7]

[Tibetan]

bsnyen-pa-dang-ni nye-bsnyen-dang /
sgrub-pa-dang-ni sgrub-chen-po / [7]

Commentary:

[Concerning the manner in which one sexually unites (with her):]

There are four branches of ritual service and rites of attainment through which one adheres to or serves a single deity. Accordingly, in this context also there is ritual service (bsnyen-pa-dang) through which the mind of the mudrā is trained and her enlightened mind extended: there is further ritual service (ni-nye-bsnyen-dang) which includes glancing at and touching (the mudrā) with purity of perception; there are rites of attainment (sgrub-pa-dang) which include the radiant visualisation of her as the deity and the consequent embrace; and there are rites of great attainment (ni-sdrug chen-po) wherein, through their display in non-duality, (the seminal fluids) descend from the four centres to the secret centre. Through these four steps, one unites with pristine cognition.[1]

[iii. The third, concerning the essence of sexual union, (comments on Ch. 11.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these four rites of ritual service and attainment in general, see above, p. 176, note 218; and on the descent of the seminal fluids from above (yas-rim), see also Ch. 13, pp. 1010-1015.

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In the maṇḍala of the lotus of the female consort.
The maṇḍala of blissful Buddha-mind is emanated.
And through the offerings of supreme joy and equanimity.
Made to all maṇḍalas of Buddhas, without exception,
(The deities) dissolve. [8]

[Tibetan]

yum-gyi padma'i dkyil-'khor-du /
bde-ba thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor spro /
sangs-rgyas sprin-tshogs [dkyil-'khor] ma-lus-la /
dgyes-mnyam mchogs-gi sbyin-pas bstim / [8]

Commentary:

[Concerning the essence of sexual union:]

Then, the receptacle of non-dual "enlightened mind" (the seminal fluid), the size of a mustard seed, is visualised in the maṇḍala of the lotus of the female consort (yum-gyi padma'i dkyil-'khor-du); and the maṇḍala of (-kyi dkyil-'khor) natural supremely blissful (bde-ba) buddha-mind (thugs) adorned with clusters of buddhas is emanated (spro) and visually created. The beings of pristine cognition are invited from the expanse and dissolve therein, whereupon the offering of this displayed (fluid) is made to all maṇḍalas [/cloud-masses] of the Buddhas without exception (sangs-rgyas-kyi dkyil-'khor [/sprin-tshogs] ma-lus-pa) who are present. Consequently, through the (-pas) great offerings of supreme joy and equanimity (dgyes-mnyam mchog-gi sbyin), the deities who have been invited and all the deities of the naturally present maṇḍala located in the centres of one's own body respectively dissolve (bstim). By virtue of making these offerings in a satisfactory manner, the accomplishment of non-dual supreme bliss is visualised to be obtained, and the "enlightened mind" (seminal fluid) is concentrated in the lotus.

[iv. The fourth, concerning the way in which the accomplishment is received (comments on Ch. 11.9):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.9]

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids.
Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the maṇḍala. [9]

[Tibetan]

sgrub-pa'i nyi-zla snying-po-de /
dkyil-'khor rdo-rje-lce yis blang / [9]

Commentary:

[Concerning the way in which the accomplishment is received:]

Those essences (snying-po-de) which are the sun and moon-fluids (nyi-zla) of the secret centres, (i.e., ovum and sperm) are activated by these four branches of (-'i) ritual service and attainment (sgrub-pa). They are drawn (blang) by the tongue-like (lce-yis) secret vajra (rdo-rje), (i.e., the penis), into the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of the four centres within the energy a channels. Filled by this movement from below, all centres of the body are permeated and this is determined to be pristine cognition.[1]

In this context, there are some who hold that once one has become radiant as the deity, (the seminal fluids) are extracted by the tongue, visualised as a vajra, and are then consumed internally. However that is not the case. They do not understand the meaning of the rite of sexual union.[2]

[v. The fifth, concerning the result of that attainment, (comments on Ch. 11.10):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan mas-rim-gyis. On this resultant phase of the experience of the four delights when seminal fluids are drawn upwards through the body, see below. Ch. 13. PP. 1015-1017.

[2]:

I.e. this practice is considered wholly internal. and is not to be confused with the conduct of a student during the secret empowerment (gsang-dbang), on which see above. Ch. 9. pp. 801-803.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.10]

One will become a skyfarer, radiant and blazing forth.
With longevity, etc.
And a master of the Wish-fulfilling Clouds. [10]

[Tibetan]

mkha'-'gro gsal-'bar tshe la-sogs /
yid-bzhin sprin-gyi bdag-por 'gyur / [10]

Commentary:

[v. The fifth, concerning the result of that attainment, (comments on Ch. 11.10):]

Through miraculous abilities one will become a sky-farer (mkha'-'gro); [1] through supernormal cognitive power one will directly experience the radiant (gsal) realisation of all things; and through the blazing forth ('bar) of the light-rays of contemplation and pristine cognition one will upwardly traverse the distinctive levels and paths.[2] With longevity (tshe) equal to that of sun and moon, the benefit of oneself and others will be attained, and the body of indestructible reality (vajrakāya) acquired; st cetera (la-sogs). Included among these, there are revealed to be obtained the eight common accomplishments of the enchanted sword, eye-salve, pills, alchemical transmutation (of iron) into gold, swift-footedness and so forth. [3] And one will also become a master of the Wish-fulfilling Clouds (yid-bzhin sprin-gyi bdag-por 'gyur) or supreme level of Samantabhadra.[4] Inasmuch as buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction, the twofold benefit of living beings will be spontaneously present.

[Rites of "Liberation" (396.6-400.2):]

The second aspect (of the particular exegesis of the maṇḍala in which rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible, see p. 899) is the maṇḍala of secret skillful means in which the rites of "liberation" are inherently pure. It has three sections.

[i. The first, concerning the object which is "liberated", (comments on Ch. 11.11):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the resultant attainment as a skyfarer (mkha'-'gro/ma or mkha'-spyod-pa/ma), see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 154b, where, as the provisional result of Yogatantra, it is clearly held to be equivalent to the tshe-dbang rig-'dzin, and *ibid.*, p. 152b, where, as the result of Kriyātantra, it is confined within kāmādhātu.

[2]:

On the traversal of the levels and paths specifically during the experiences of the perfection stage, see below. Ch. 13, PP. 1012-1016,

[3]:

"eight common accomplishments" (thun-mong-gi grub-pa brgyad). Cf. NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 144, where sky-faring and invisibility are added to complete the eight, and where "alchemical transmutation" is replaced by "immortality & the suppression of disease". These are held to be the lowest accomplishments of a mundane vidyādhara.

[4]:

I.e. the sixteenth buddha-level or ye-shes bla-ma, on which see above, p. 27, note 51, and below, p. 968, note 23.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.11]

Those who have become fields (of compassion).

Belonging to supreme and less supreme (realms), [11]

[Tibetan]

zhing-gyur mchog-dang mchog-phran-rnams / [11]

Commentary:

[Rites of "Liberation" (396.6-400.2):]

The second aspect (of the particular exegesis of the maṇḍala in which rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible, see p. 899) is the maṇḍala of secret skillful means in which the rites of "liberation" are inherently pure. It has three sections.

[i. The first, concerning the object which is "liberated", (comments on Ch. 11.11):]

They are those who have become fields (zhing-gyur) of compassion, on whom it says in the Tantra of Vajrakīla (NGB. Vol. 19):

The commitment which "liberates" by compassion

Is not one of murder and suppression—

Having filled the components with indestructible reality.

One meditates on consciousness as indestructible reality.

Accordingly, one (who enacts this rite) should have no inherent characteristics of hatred, and should be guided by compassion.[1] Now, those sentient beings who cannot be trained by the rites of pacification and enrichment, and who are to be trained by means of sorcery comprise gods and human beings belonging to supreme (mchog) exalted realms, and (dang) living beings of less supreme (mchog-phran) evil existences. When

classified, there are beings of ten such fields (of compassion) who endure the causes and results of suffering. Consequently, it is in order that they might be freed from their respective sufferings that these beings are "liberated".

It also says in the Clarification of Commitments (P. 4744):

Both those hostile to the Precious Jewels,
And to the body of the master.
Those who have deviated from their commitments.
And those who are contentious.
Those who (inappropriately) come to the (maṇḍala) assembly,
And those who are harmful to all (beings).
Those with a hostile or evil disposition
With respect to the commitments.
And those who are beings of the three evil existences—
These ten kinds of being
Are earnestly received by all Yogins.

Indeed, when one resorts to activity on behalf of others, understands the nature of change, and has great compassion, there are occasions when the first seven non-virtues are permitted, even in the causal phase of the greater vehicle:[2]

For a great spiritual warrior,
Seven non-virtues are permitted.

Similarly, there was (the incident when Śākyamuni "liberated") an evil armed assailant (who had murdered five hundred merchants).[3]

[ii. The second section, concerning the skillful means through which these beings are "liberated", (comments on Ch. 11.12):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these rites of "liberation," see above, pp. 61-63, and especially below, Chs. 15, 20: and for an example of the importance of compassion and realisation for one who would accomplish the rites of "liberation," see the life of gNyags Jñānakumāra in NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 281-289.

[2]:

N.L.. but for similar quotations from the Udānavarga (T. 213) and the Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśasūtra (T. 184). see respectively NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 120, and Book 2. Pt. 7. P. 738-9.

[3]:

On this incident from the past lives of Śākyamuni, see dPal-sprul Rin-po-che, kun-bzang bla-ma'i zhal-lung. pp. 108a-b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.12]

Are placed by the learned (Yogin)
Upon solar and lunar disks.
With pride, he meditates on that hand-made (effigy):
Transformed into the syllable HŪṂ, and so purified.
This dissolves into the expanse,
And then blazing forth as the symbolic seal.
It becomes the Buddha-body.
Brilliant through the proliferation
Of its rays of light.
Then he meditates that (the evil one) has become triumphant
On the crown of the head. [12]

[Tibetan]

nyi-zla'i steng-du mkhas-pas gzhas /
nga-rgyal lag-gi 'du-byed bsgom /
hūṁ-du gyur-pas rnam-par-dag /
dbyings-su thim-nas phyag-rgyar 'bar /
skur-gyur 'od-zer 'phro-bas brjid /
gtsug-tu rnam-par rgyal-bar bsgom / [12]

Commentary:

[Concerning the skillful means through which these beings are "liberated":]

The best Yogin "liberates" (these beings) through contemplation, the mediocre Yogin "liberates" them through contemplation, mantra and gestures of sealing; and the inferior one, in addition to those methods, gathers together the actual sacraments including a hearth and an effigy, and then "liberates" them utilising a representative image.[1]

The basic equipment is the blazing hearth located in the southwest of the maṇḍala which is triangular in the shape of the (Sanskrit) syllable E, and filled with charcoal (rdo-sol). Within it and upon (steng-du) a solar disk (nyi) derived from the syllable MA, and a lunar disk (zla) derived from the syllable A, an effigy (of such beings) and tokens indicative of their names and clans are placed (gzhas) by (-pas) the yogin who is learned (mkhas) in the rite of "liberation", while (the beings themselves) are summoned and Induced by means of contemplation.[2]

Now, there are five ways in which (the Yogin) is learned: He is learned in the view which liberates by nature, he is learned in meditation which liberates by contemplation, he is learned in conduct which liberates

through sense-organs, objects and time. he is learned in the oral instructions which liberate by the secret and supreme skillful means, and he is learned in the deeds and conduct which "liberate" by profound sorcery (i.e., ejection of saṃsāra).[3]

Then endowed with pride (nga-rgyal), he visualises himself as a great warrior, the essence of the male and female consorts, and thinking that the malignant beings should be "liberated", he visualises on the ten fingers of his hands the five seed-syllables of the spiritual warriors or the ten syllables HŪṂ, which are the seeds of the ten "liberating" spirits (sgrol-ging) and whence emerge the ten male "liberating" spirits (ging-pho bcu).[4] Meanwhile, he turns his copper dagger or kīla and thrusts it into the heart of that hand-made (lag-gi 'du-byed) effigy, so that it is cut into pieces of flesh and blood. He then meditates (bsgom) that the ten "liberating" spirits deliver these to the central deity and offer them to the maṇḍala. The obscurations of the three media (of the beings' body, speech and mind) are also refined: The consciousness is transformed into (-du-gyur) the single white syllable HŪṂ. and so purified (-pas rnam-par dag) of all deeds and propensities. This same syllable HŪṂ gradually dissolves into the expanse (dbyings-su thim) of its crescent-shaped breve-accent (zla-tshe), and then (nas) the crescent is wholly transformed into the mirror-like pristine cognition, which itself becomes a single vajra, the symbolic seal (phyag-rgyar) of buddha-mind, blazing forth ('bar) rays of light.

The Yogin "then meditates (bsgom) that it becomes the Buddha-body (skur-gyur) of Vajrasattva, brilliant through the proliferation of its rays of light ('od-zer 'phro-bas brjid); and that on the crown of the head (gtsuc-tu) it has a finger-size Samantabhadra image, indicating that (the evil one) has become triumphant (rnam-par rgyal-bar) over saṃsāra. Seated upon a lunar throne on a maṇḍala of vital energy, this (image) is ejected by the sound of PHAṬ to Akaniṣṭha where it is visualised as Vajrasattva in the secret centre of the female consort, seated in the presence of the tathāgata. Consequently, (the evil one) is visualised to become a Tathāgatas' son, acting on behalf of sentient beings.[5]

[iii. The third, concerning the beneficial attributes of having performed this rite of "liberation", (comments on Ch. 11.13):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these techniques, see below. Ch. 20.

[2]:

Cf. Ch. 20. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, p. 314, does not mention the seed-syllables MA and A in his interpretation of this verse.

[3]:

Among these five ways in which the yogin is liberated (mkhas-tshul

lga), the fourth refers to the sbyor-ba practices, and the fifth to the present rite of wrathful "liberation".

[4]:

On the class of deities from which the enumerations of sgrol-ging bcu and their functionaries, the ging-pho are derived, see Nebesky-Wolkowitz, Oracles and Demons Tibet. pp. 278-279. See also above Ch. 9, note 116.

[5]:

The action described here is also known as "transference of consciousness" ('pho-ba, Sanskrit saṅkrānti). On its selfapplication in consequence of the sampannakrama practices at the time of death, see below. Ch. 13, PP. 1039-1040.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.13]

This is the wondrous skillful means.

Which releases beings from evil existences. [13]

[Tibetan]

ngo-mtshar ngan-'gro thar-pa'i thabs / [13]

Commentary:

[iii. The third, concerning the beneficial attributes of having performed this rite of "liberation", (comments on Ch. 11.13):]

This skillful means, by the "liberation" of sorcery, releases into exalted realms those sinful beings who are otherwise certain to be subsequently born in limitless evil existences. This is the skillful means (thabs), particularly sublime, the great secret of the vehicle of indestructible reality, more wondrous (ngo-mtshar) than the other vehicles, which releases (thar-pa'i) sinful beings from evil existences (ngan-'gro) and obtains their "liberation".

There are some who might doubt that such acts of killing belong to the genuine path because the rite is based on hatred, but there is no defect. For those living beings are released by means of "liberation" with an altruistic mind, devoid of hatred.[1]

It says in the Supreme Reasoning (rig-byed bla-ma):

No defect is visible

In one who acts malignly

For the benefit of the malign.

And in the Purification of All Evil Existences (T. 483), which is 39 a Yogatantra, it also says:

Sarvavid has said that
If one should eradicate
Those who make improper attempts
To curse the Guru, and so forth.
One will become accomplished.

And:

Moreover, those who attempt to curse the Guru.
Those who harm the Three Precious Jewels,
And those who destroy the Buddhas' teaching
Should be "liberated" by the mantras of a Mantrin.

[Maṇḍala of Magical Pristine Cognition Untained by Defects with respect to Rites of Sexual Union and "Liberation" (400.2-402.1):]

[The third aspect (of the particular exegesis of the maṇḍala in which the rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible—see p. 899) concerns the maṇḍala of magical pristine cognition untainted by defects with respect to rites of sexual union and "liberation". (It comments on Ch. 11.14):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the Importance of compassion in this rite, see above, note 30.
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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.14]

The primordial uncreated real nature
Appears as a magical apparition.
In the manner of an optical illusion.
Although all rites of sexual union and "liberation" have been performed.

They have not been performed, even to the extent of an atomic particle.
[14]

[Tibetan]

ye-nas skye-med de-bzhin-nyid /
sgyu-mar snang-ba mig-yor tshul /
sbyor-sgrol bya-ba kun-byas-kyang /
rdul-cha tsam-yang byas-pa-med / [14]

Commentary:

[The third aspect (of the particular exegesis of the maṇḍala in which the rites of sexual union and "liberation" are indivisible—see p. 899) concerns the maṇḍala of magical pristine cognition untainted by defects with respect to rites of sexual union and "liberation". (It comments on Ch. 11.14):]

Ultimately, the abiding nature of all things is the primordial (ye-nas) original uncreated real nature (skye-med de-bzhin-nyid), on which the Sūtra of the Lamp of Precious Jewels (T. 145) says:

All things are uncreated.
And eternally resemble space.

And the Sūtra of the Non-Emergence of All Things (T. 180):

Whosoever sees that there is no Buddha.
No doctrine of the Buddha.
And never sentient beings.
And whosoever knows the reality
Which resembles space.
Will swiftly become a superior being.

From the very moment of its relative appearance, in the manner of an optical illusion (mig-yor tshul) which is not (objectively) recognised, (this reality) diversely appears (snang-ba) through conditions and without independent existence as a magical apparition (sgyu-mar), just as the forms of a horse. ox. man or woman arise in place of a twig or a small stone.

It says in the Sūtra of the Ornament Pristine Cognition's Appearance (t. 100):

Just as forms which have materialised
As a magical apparition
Are not created and do not come into being.
The diversity of phenomena similarly
Is not created and does not come into being.

So it is that because all things are primordially pure and of the nature of a magical apparition, the rites of sexual union and "liberation" too are primordially pure. Although all the rites of sexual union and "liberation" have been performed (sbyor-sgrol bya-ba kun-byas kyang) by the Yogin who understands this nature of magical apparition, from the very moment of their performance, (rites of) sexual union and "liberation" generated by defects which accumulate (world-forming) deeds, and possessing Inherent characteristics, have not (med) actually been performed (byas-pa), even to

the extent of an (tsham-yang) indivisible atomic particle (rdul-cha). This is because there is no subjective attachment.

It also says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rgyas-pa):

One who is learned in skillful means
Should perform (the rites)
In the manner of magicians
Whose emanational magical apparitions
Are untainted by any defect
Compounded of virtue and non-virtue.

And in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

Although in (the view of) ordinary beings.
One may cut off many millions of heads.
One who knows well that all beings are emanations.
Is Indeed without fear.

And in the Yogatantras:

Even if one slays all sentient beings.
One is untainted by sins.

When sin emerges with inherent characteristics there must also be inherent characteristics of attachment to its true existence, but here there is established to be no degeneration owing to the absence of substantial existence and the transformation of perception, just as in the case of a madman who is without subjective apprehension.

This is known from the following passages of the Root Sūtra of the Vinaya (T. 4117):

Dreams are non-existent in a similar manner.
Their fruit is itself uncompounded.

And:

There is no degeneration
For those who are mad and mentally disturbed.

And:

When the perception of the central consciousness
Is itself transformed...

In this context too, the rites of sexual union and "liberation" are realised to be dream-like and without substantial existence, the perception is transformed into that of a deity, and there is no defect because, as in the case of a madman, there is no attachment to true existence.[1]

[The Maṇḍala of the Displayed Feast Offerings (402.1-416.2)]

The second part (of the exegesis of this chapter—see p. 896) concerns the maṇḍala of the displayed feast-offerings. It includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview of the Mandala of Feast-Offerings (402.1-408.1):]

There are three parts: characteristic nature, classification, and the skillful means through which the maṇḍala of feast-offerings is to be performed.

i. As to the first: The (Tibetan) term tshogs-kyi 'khor-lo or "maṇḍala of feast-offerings" is derived from (the Sanskrit) gaṇacakra. its characteristic nature is that there is a feast or assembly (tshogs) of the extraordinary supports, persons, and Implements associated with the deliberate practice of the secret mantras.

It is said in the Tantra which Comprises the Supreme Path of the Means Which Clearly Reveal All-Positive Pristine Cognition (NGB. Vol.3):

The feast-offerings of supports, persons and implements
Are said to be assembled through great, secret skillful means.

[ii. As for its classification, there are three sections: The actual classification: the sequence of ritual activity; and the purpose for which feast-offerings are to be performed.]

On the first of these, it is stated in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720):

An assembly comprised entirely of intimate persons
Is called the feast-offering
Of a congregation of Yogins:
The complete enjoyment of their possessions
Is explained to be the feast-offering
Of blissful enjoyment;
The gathering of all deities and oath-bound ones
Is explained to be the feast-offering
Of a great congregation;
The continual perfection of the two kinds of provision
Is certainly considered to be
The great feast-offering

So it is that the feast offerings are of four kinds, namely: the feast-offering which is a gathering of fortunate beings; the feast-offering of the Implements which they possess; the feasto offering of the deities of accomplishment; and the feast-offering of merit and pristine cognition.[2]

The first refers to the assembly in pairs of the male and female yogins who possess the commitments: and It illustrates the nature of skillful means and discriminative awareness. Now, when this occurs in a small gathering, there are either only the male and female consorts who represent the central deities, the three pairs who represent the nature of

buddha-body, speech and mind, or the five pairs who indicate the five enlightened families, i.e. two, six, or ten (individuals) altogether. in the intermediate gathering the yogins equal in number the hundred deities of the maṇḍala, and in the large gathering there is a great multitude over and above these.

Accordingly it says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-rgyud):

In the small gathering they number two, six, or ten.
In the intermediate one they equal the deities
Of the maṇḍala in their number,
And in the large one they form a great multitude.

Now, there are also appropriate feast-offerings in which manifold male and female Yogins are not coupled together. These are called either the feast of the male spiritual warriors or the banquet of the female spiritual warriors.[3]

The second (kind of feast-offering) refers to all the implements, outer, inner and secret. in particular, meat and ale are the sacraments of skillful means and discriminative awareness, which it is improper to be without.
[4]

The same text says:

Ale and meat with nectar
Are the sacraments of accomplishment,
Which it is improper to be without.
To eat and drink there are
Grains, mineral elixirs, fruits,
And all desired things.

These are also adorned by many cloud-masses of song, dance and music.

The third (kind of feast-offering) refers to all the maṇḍalas of supporting (buddha-body) and supported (pristine cognition), and to the oceanic throngs of the oath-bound (protectors), in which the central deity is surrounded by a retinue, i.e., those of the actual Buddha-bodies, the flower clusters which are visually created as the deities, and all those who are Invited through contemplation to the field of merit.

The fourth (kind of feast-offering) refers to the two continuous provisions. During the performance of the maṇḍala of feast-offerings in particular, the provision of merit Includes all the deliberate practices and appearances associated with the creation stage of skillful means, and the provision of pristine cognition Includes the realisation and meditations of the profound uncreated (disposition) subsumed in the perfection stage of discriminative awareness.[5]

The second section (of this classification) concerns the sequence of ritual activity. It comprises both the sequences for the peaceful deities and for the wrathful deities.

As to the former: During the feast offering of the peaceful deities, the yogins, assuming the guise and hand-implements of the peaceful deities and possessing the symbols of the deities on whom their flowers have landed, enter into the assembly hall. Thereat, the four male gatekeepers including Yamāntaka are seated by the gate of the assembly hall. (The yogins) raise a single finger to symbolise their entreaty: "May we enter!"; at which (the gatekeepers) raise two fingers in reply, which is to say, "Come in!" Having gone within, the master of ceremonies (las-kyi rdo-rje) raises his hands in the gesture of the three-pronged vajra to symbolise the question, "What is your enlightened family?"; at which in response they reveal the gesture or seal of the central deity belonging to the enlightened family on which their flowers have landed.[6]

Then they make obeisance to the master of indestructible reality, and, in accordance with the sequence of empowerment, are given the vase-empowerment with the lay-vows, the secret empowerment with the novitiate, the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition with the vows of a monk, and the (empowerment of) the Great Perfection with the status of a sthavira.[7]

The Yogins then take their seats in an orderly manner, either forming a single row for each of the four enlightened families in the four directions of the central deity, or having placed symbolic hand-emblems such as the wheel and vajra at the head of the row to indicate the rows of the maṇḍala of the five enlightened families which are situated to the right, left and their mid-points. The ritual is then completed.

Secondly there is (the sequence) for the wrathful deities which, one should know to be similar.

In a maṇḍala of feast offering which includes both the peaceful and wrathful deities together, the male and female Yogins who represent the peaceful deities are seated on the right of the master of indestructible reality, and those representing the wrathful deities are on the left. It is also best if the numbers of male and female Yogins are equal.

The third section (of this classification) concerns the purpose for which (the feast-offering) is to be performed. This is to be known in accordance with the details of the four rites: When the yogins are those who would repair their commitments and purify obscurations, the feast offering is fulfilled for the purpose of pacification. When their purpose is to increase the lifespan or possessions. it is enrichment. For overpowering and summoning it is subjugation: and for the eradication of impediments and malignant beings and so forth it is wrath. (The feast offerings) are thus endowed in order that the desired purpose of these different rites might be attained.

iii. The third aspect (of the overview of the maṇḍala of displayed feast-offerings) is the skillful means through which the feast offerings are to be performed. It has five aspects.

The first concerns the preparation of the supports and implements: In

that location, during the night and so forth, beside the maṇḍala of the deities which is either drawn on cloth or arrayed with heaps of coloured powders, the assistants (of the feast) should prepare the outer, inner and secret offerings, all the implements which have been obtained for the feast-offering, and the pills of nectar which form the inner offering.

The second is the entreaty that transformation may occur in the course of the Yoga:[8] All the male and female yogins are seated in rows and then the master of ceremonies (las-kyi rdo-rje) makes obeisance, scatters flowers, and bows, joining the sleeves of his ceremonial robe together at the knees.

He should make obeisance, slowly reciting the following words:[9]

Ho! By the natural, immeasurable spirituality of glorious Samantabhadra, may such and such a guru and holder of indestructible reality who is present for the sake of living beings, acting as the central deity, direct his intention towards these great mighty lords of yoga. Although all things are primordially awakened in the nature of the Great Perfection, may he direct his intention towards the world-systems of living beings who pervade all the ten directions of the six worlds through the power of ignorance. Through his display of great spirituality, we beseech him to abide in yoga through profound contemplation in the maṇḍala of natural spontaneous presence.

The third concerns the creation of the maṇḍala of deities: Then the offering-cake (gtor-ma) is offered to the impediments, which are expelled to the frontiers of the oceanic (maṇḍala).[10] A boundary is delineated, comprising perimeters of fire, mountains, blazing weapons, and the ten wrathful deities.[11] Then, the maṇḍala of deities is radiantly visualised in the previously manner, and it should be pleased with offerings until actually pleased. The offerings of the feast should then be purified by incense, multiplied and transformed in the appropriate manner.[12] An offering compounded from the five meats and five nectars is then consecrated and offered in a broad and vast skull-container.[13]

The fourth concerns the enjoyment (of those offerings): It is visualised that there are five seeds representing the male spiritual warriors and five seeds representing the female spiritual warriors on the solar and lunar disks (= fingers) in the palms of the two hands, and that, derived therefrom, there are ten male and female deities of the feast offering (tshogs-kyi lha yab-yum bcu) who spread forth their offering clouds of the five desired attributes. It is visualised that they make contact with the food and drink, and consequently are pleased. Then, offerings should be made to the deities of the components, sensory bases and activity fields (i.e. the assembled yogins themselves).

The master of ceremonies again makes obeisance, and distributes the sacraments of skillful means and discriminative awareness with the lotus seal or gesture,[14] saying:[15]

HŪM! Direct your intention, great spiritual heroes.
These are excellent things!

Do not have doubts regarding the things that are gathered.
Think of Brahmans, dogs and outcastes as identical
In nature, and enjoy them.

In response, the recipients also form the lotus gesture or seal, and accept and enjoy the offerings, saying:[16]

OM! I make obeisance to the real nature.
The body of reality of the Sugatas,
Where the subject-object dichotomy is abandoned.
And desire and other such stains are absent.
ALALAHO!

In the rows of the assembled feast-offering, one should not cling to the true existence of disputation, clamour, common appearances and so forth. Indeed one should perceive satisfaction, delight, and an absence of subjective clinging, so that body, speech and mind respectively become deity, mantra and reality.

The fifth concerns the concluding rites: Afterwards, the residual tormas is dispatched, and there should be performed songs of indestructible reality, glorious dancing, dedication (of merit) and the benediction.[17]

Concerning the beneficial attributes of those (feast offerings) too, it says in the Indestructible Reality of the Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Among merits, the maṇḍala of feast-offerings is supreme.
All aspirations will be accomplished in this life.
Impediments and obstacles will be pacified.
And in the next life, one will obtain
(The level of) Samantabhadra,
The field of the awareness-holding conquerors.

Now, these offerings surpass those which are made according to the lower vehicles in three ways: Their object is the buddhas because it is they who radiate as the deities; their accomplishment is not ordinary because they are transformed into nectar; and their aspiration is without subjective attachment because reality is displayed. Therefore, this nature of skillful means is sublime through the extraordinary discriminative awareness of the vehicle of indestructible reality (vajrayāna).

[Interlinear Commentary (408.2-416.2):]

The interlinear commentary (on the maṇḍala of displayed feastoofferings) comprises a brief teaching on the feast-offerings of Samantabhadra, and a detailed exegesis of their nature according to the different maṇḍalas.

[i. The first has two (gsum sic!) sections, the former concerning the nature (of the feast-offering) which is to be known. (It comments on Ch. 11.15):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The importance of realising the absence of inherent existence (niḥsvabhāvatā) with respect to the sbyor-sgrol practices is elaborated further in Ch. 19, pp. 1218-1220.

[2]:

tshogs rnam-pa bzhi-ni: skal-ldan 'dus-pa'i tshogs, 'byor-ldan yo-byad-kyi tshogs, dngos-grub lha'i tshogs, and bsod-nams ye-shes-kyi tshogs.

[3]:

Tibetan dpa'-bo'i dga'-ston-dang dpa'-mo'i pson-mo.

[4]:

On these sacraments of meat (sha) and ale (chang), which are prohibited in Kriyātantra (NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 4. p. 214a) but required within the enumeration of five meats and five nectars according to Mahāyoga, see *ibid.* p. 222a.

[5]:

“deliberate practices” (kun-tu spyod-pa).

[6]:

"gesture of the three-pronged vajra" (rdo-rje rtse-gsum-pa'i phyag-rgya). The master of ceremonies (karmācārya) who performs the practical functions of the empowerment is contrasted with the master of indestructible reality (vajrācārya) who presides over and actually confers the empowerment.

[7]:

On this fusion of the four abhiṣeka with the vinaya vows, see also NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 7. PP. 758-764. On the sthavira (gnas-brtan) and their affinity with the Bodhisattva vehicle, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 52-55; and J. Tate, *The Sixteen Elders*.

[8]:

Tibetan rnal-'byor-la gnas-phar gsol-gdab-pa.

[9]:

N.L.

[10]:

Tibetan bgegs-gtor are offering-cakes which remove impediments outside the maṇḍala. See e.g., the illustration in klong-chen snying-thig-gi gtor-ma'i dpe'u-ris, no. 236.

[11]:

On these perimeters of the maṇḍala. see figures 1 and 4, opposite p. 1324 and 1369 respectively; also the illustration of the vimāna opposite p. 374.

[12]:

Tibetan bsang-sbyangs spel-bsgyur ji-lta-ba-bzhin. This procedure is accompanied by visualisation and the recitation of mantras.

[13]:

Tibetan thod-pa'i snod. Sanskrit kapāla. On the purity of the five meats (sha-ṅga) and five nectars (bdud-rsti ṅga). see also above. Ch. 9, pp. 815 and note 91; and below. Ch. 19, pp. 1210-1211.

[14]:

"lotus seal or suture" (padma'i phyag-rgya). The tshogs-kyi lha yab-yum bcu are the offering Gods and Goddesses of the five senses visualised on the ten fingers.

[15]:

N.L. The significance of these verses is that they emphasise the purity of all conventionally impure substances, which are to be consumed as sacraments of the five meats and five nectars.

[16]:

N.L.

[17]:

On the offerins of the residual gtor-ma (lhag-ma) which is made in the course of the feast-offering, see below. Ch. 20 p. 1267. "songs of indestructible reality" (rdo-rje glu). "dedication of merit" (sngo-ba), "benediction" (bkra-shis brjod-pa).

Text 11.15 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.15]

The world, its contents, and the mind-stream

Are realised to be pure.
Through the two samenesses
And the two superior samenesses
The maṇḍala is the field of Samantabhadra. [15]

[Tibetan]

snod-bcud rgyu-rnams dag-rtogs-shing /
mnyam-gnyis lhag-pa'i mnyam-gnyis-kyis /
dkyil-'khor kun-tu bzang-po'i zhing / [15]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (408.2-416.2):]

The interlinear commentary (on the maṇḍala of displayed feastoofferings) comprises a brief teaching on the feast-offerings of Samantabhadra, and a detailed exegesis of their nature according to the different maṇḍalas.

[i. The first has two (gsum sic!) sections, the former concerning the nature (of the feast-offering) which is to be known. (It comments on Ch. 11.15):]

These (offerings) illustrate that through the three purities and the four modes of sameness all things are primordial Buddha-hood in the field of Samantabhadra. Now, the essences of the five elements which form the system of the external world (snod) are pure in the nature of the five female consorts. The sentient beings who form its inner contents (bcud) subsumed in the five components are purified in the five male consorts; and the senseorgans and consciousness of the mind-stream (rgyud-rnams) of the respective (beings) along with their sense-objects are pure respectively in the male spiritual warriors, the female spiritual warriors, and the male and female gatekeepers. Moreover, those who abide in the great maṇḍala where the world is the nature of the celestial palace, its contents are the male and female deities, and the individual mind-stream is the five pristine cognitions, are realised to be pure (rnam-dag rtogs-shing) in the nature of primordial Buddha-hood.[1]

Moreover, there are the two samenesses (mnyam-gnyis) in accordance with which all things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are ultimately the same in their uncreated disposition, and relatively the same in the manner of a magical apparition; and the two superior samenesses (lhag-pa'i mnyam-gnyis) in accordance with which the five components are buddhas and the eight aggregates of consciousness are pristine cognition. [2]

Through (-kyis) these (axioms), the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) in which all things are without good and bad, or acceptance and rejection, is the field of (-i zhing) the natural Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang-po), the abiding nature of genuine reality as it arises and appears, pervading all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa without partiality or bias.

It says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

The centre is the unerring genuine nucleus.
The periphery envelops and entirely pervades
Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

[The latter concerns those who should know (the nature of the feast-offerings. It comments on Ch. 11.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On this axiom of the "three purities" (dag-pa gsum), see above, p. 172, note 202; also H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery. p. 10.

[2]:

On the axiom of the "four samenesses" (mnyam-pa bzhi). see p. 172, note 203; and H.V. Guenther. Matrix of Mystery, p. 10.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.16]

Conduct is transformed through the two great provisions.
And then the Yogin who has not degenerated
In the branches (of mantra).
Who possesses the requisites.
And completely knows the rituals.
Will, by means of the maṇḍala of feast offerings,
Certainly accomplish his excellent purpose. [16]

[Tibetan]

byed-spyod tshogs-chen gnyis gyur-nas /
yan-lag ma-nyams yo-byad ldan /
cho-ga rdzogs-par shes-pa-yis /
rnal-'byor tshogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyis /
nges-par legs-pa'i dgos-pa 'grub / [16]

Commentary:

[Those who should know (the nature of the feast-offerings):]

When, by realising this nature of the Great Perfection, empowerment has been obtained in the maṇḍala of genuine reality, all conduct (byed-spyod) of body, speech and mind that one has performed is perfectly

transformed (gyur) through the innate force of the two great provisions (tshogs-chen gnyis) of merit and pristine cognition, and then (nas) whatever appears arises as pristine cognition.

It says in Vajrasattva: the Great Space (NGB. Vols. 1-2):

When all things are realised to be uncreated.
Spontaneously perfect and primordially liberated,
One's deliberate practice spontaneously accomplishes
The creation and perfection stages.
And the unfabricated nature perfectly appears.

The Yogin (rnal-'byor) who has not degenerated in the (ma-nyams) five branches (yan-lag) of mantra which have been previously been described, who possesses the (ldan) five requisites (yo-byad), and who completely knows the (rdzogs-par shes-pa-yi) five rituals (cho-ga) should please (the deities) by means of the maṇḍala of feast offerings (tshogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyis), endowed with supportive individuals and the implements of a feast-offering, at special times and in locations such as charnel grounds. Once this has been attained, he will certainly (nges-par) accomplish ('grub) the result, i.e. the provisional status of the three kinds of awareness-holder and four rites, and the conclusive enlightenment, which is his excellent purpose (legs-pa'i dgos-pa)[1]

[The second part (of the interlinear commentary concerning the maṇḍala of the displayed feast-offerings) is the detailed exegesis of the nature of the (feast-offerings) according to different kinds of maṇḍala.]

It has two sections, namely, the nature of the supporting maṇḍala and the sequence of attainment which accords with it.

[i. The former comprises both the maṇḍala of the peaceful deities and the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. The first is threefold, namely, the maṇḍalas of five clusters, three clusters and a single cluster (of deities).]

[Among them, the first (comments on Ch. 11.17):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the five requisites and five rituals, see above. Ch. 9, pp. 850-852; for the four rites, pp. 783-786, 1258-1264; and for the types of vidyādhara, provisional and conclusive, pp. 810-811, 853-854, 959-974.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.17]

One should meditate on the form
Of the deities of the five clusters.
Arrayed five in union with five.
And on the ten wrathful male deities.
And the ten wrathful female deities.
In the manner of a circle. [17]

[Tibetan]

lnga-dang lnga-yi sbyor-ba-yis /
tshom-bu lnga-yi lha-bkod-la /
khro-bo bcu-dang khro-mo bcu /
'khor-lo'i tshul-du rnam-par bsgom / [17]

Commentary:

[The second part (of the interlinear commentary concerning the maṇḍala of the displayed feast-offerings) is the detailed exegesis of the nature of the (feast-offerings) according to different kinds of maṇḍala.]

It has two sections, namely, the nature of the supporting maṇḍala and the sequence of attainment which accords with it.

[i. The former comprises both the maṇḍala of the peaceful deities and the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. The first is threefold, namely, the maṇḍalas of five clusters, three clusters and a single cluster (of deities).]

[Among them, the first (comments on Ch. 11.17):]

One should meditate on the form (rnam-par-bsgom) of the deities of the five clusters (tshom-bu lnga-yi lha), which are derived from the [conquerors of the] five (lnga-dang) enlightened families in indivisible union (sbyor-ba-yis) with the five (lnga-yi) female consorts or objective fields of the five enlightened families. These are arrayed (bkod) fifty in number, i.e., the ten male and female consorts forming five basic (or central pairs) of male and female consorts, and the ten in each of the other four (peripheral) enlightened families. And also (one should meditate) on (la) the ten wrathful male deities (khro-bo bcu) such as Hūṃkāra and the ten wrathful female deities (dang khro-mo bcu) such as Vajranāditā (rdorje sgra 'byin-ma), who are situated outside those (deities) on the ten radial points of a protective circle, hollow inside, i.e., in the eight cardinal directions along with the zenith and nadir. They are in the manner of a circle ('khor-lo'i tshul-du) which protects (the maṇḍala) from obstacles.[1]

Now, in the middle there are the male and female central deities (Vairocana) who are natural expressions of Samantabhadra, and around them are Sattvavajra, Ratnavajra, Dharmavajra, and Karmavajra with their four respective female consorts Sthiravajrā, Jvalavajrā, Valivajrā, and Kṣobhyavajrā; making ten male and female consorts altogether.

In the east are the male and female consorts Akṣobhya, and around them are Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhū with their four

respective female consorts Lāsyā, Dhūpā, Aṅkuṣā, and Vajratārā.

In the south are the male and female consorts Ratnasambhava, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajraratna, Vajrasūrya, Vajradhvaja, and Vajrapāśa, with their respective female consorts Mālyā, Puṣpā, Pāśā, and Vajrasukhī.

In the west are the male and female consorts Amitābha, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajracakra, and Vajravāk with their respective female consorts Gītā, Ālokā, Sphoṭā, and Vajradyuticitrā (rdo-rje gsal-bkra-ma).

In the north are the male and female consorts Amoghasiddhi, and around them are the four (male consorts) Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣita, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajramuṣṭi, with their respective female consorts Nartī, Gandhā, Kiṅkinī, and Vajrapraveśā.

Outside these fifty (deities) there are the ten wrathful male deities with their consorts, so that the five clusters altogether comprise seventy deities. [2]

In general it is held that the clusters represent the central deities and retinues when the form of the celestial palace with its gates, tiered pediments and so forth is absent, whereas the maṇḍala proper does include the celestial palace. However in this (tradition), it indicates that these deities are present as an encircling cluster.

[Secondly there is the maṇḍala of the three clusters (which comments on Ch. 11.18):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The deities of the five clusters (tshom-bu lnga'i lha-tshogs) correspond to those appearing in the fifth empowerment of ability, the rdo-rje rgyal-po'i dbang. See above. Ch. 9. pp. 800-801; also below, 942-943

[2]:

For the enumeration of khro-bo bcu, see Ch. 9. note 11; and on the khro-mo bcu including Vajranāditā, see the Vajrakīlayamūla-tantrakaṇḍa. P. 78. Vol. 3. pp. 154.4.8-155-3-8.

Text 11.18 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.18]

One should meditate on the deities of the three clusters.
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind.
Namely those of the enlightened family of the Tathāgata.
Of the enlightened family of Indestructible reality.
And of the enlightened family of the lotus;
Which have a host of wrathful deities. [18]

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin rigs-dang rdo-rje'i rigs /
padma'i rigs-te sku-gsung-thugs /
khro-bo'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-yi /
tshom-bu gsum-gyi lha-rnams bsgom / [18]

Commentary:

[Secondly there is the maṇḍala of the three clusters (which comments on Ch. 11.18):]

One should meditate on the deities of the three clusters (tshom-bu gsum-gyi lha-rnams bsgom), which is the maṇḍala comprising the thirty deities of Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsuns-thugs), namely (-te), those of the enlightened family of the tathāgata, of the enlightened family of indestructible reality (de-bzhin rigs-dang rdo-rje rigs) and of the enlightened family of the lotus (padma'i rigs), each of which is naturally expressed as ten male and female consorts. On their periphery too they have a host of wrathful deities (khro-bo 'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-yi), namely, the eight male and female gatekeepers.

[The third is the maṇḍala of a single cluster (which comments on Ch. 11.19):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.19]

One should meditate on the deities of a single cluster,
Namely the enlightened family among enlightened families.
Where the central deity of the enlightened families
Is the mind of Buddha-mind, the supreme Buddha-mind;
And which has a host of wrathful deities. [19]

[Tibetan]

rigs-kyi rigs-te rigs-kyi gtso /
thugs-kyi thugs-te thugs-kyi mchog /
khro-bo'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-yi /

tshom-bu gcig-pa'i lha-rnams bsgom / [19]

Commentary:

[The third is the maṇḍala of a single cluster (which comments on Ch. 11.19):]

One should meditate on the (bsgom) eighteen deities of a single cluster (tshom-bu gcig-pa'i lha-rnams), namely (-te), the enlightened family (rigs) of Samantabhadra, the real nature among (kyi) all enlightened families (rigs), where the central deity of (-kyi gtso) the maṇḍala of the five enlightened families (rigs) is in the form of Vairocana. His nature, when the maṇḍala of the Tathāgata is divided into its five enlightened families, is that of the mind of Buddha-mind (thugs-kyi thugs-te). Indeed, it is the supreme Buddha-mind (thugs-kyi mchog) which is adorned with dark-blue Vairocana as the central deity. The periphery of this maṇḍala, which comprises the ten (basic) deities, has a host of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i tshogs-dang ldan-pa-yi), namely, the eight male and female gatekeepers.

[The latter is the maṇḍala of the wrathful deities (which comments on Ch. 11.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.20]

Through the assembled hosts which include
The great assembly of male wrathful deities
And female wrathful deities.
With those of their intermediaries,
Retainers, attendants, and other servants.
The rites and accomplishment are perfected. [20]

[Tibetan]

khro-bo khro-mo'i tshogs chen-po /
pho-nya phyag-brnyan bka'-nyan tshogs /
ci-bgyi la-sogs tshogs-rnams-kyis /
dngos-grub las-rnams rdzogs-par-byed / [19]

Commentary:

[The latter is the maṇḍala of the wrathful deities (which comments on Ch. 11.20):]

The feast-offerings are attained in the blazing maṇḍala through the (-kyis) great assembled hosts (tshogs-rnams) of the fiftyeight Blood-Drinkers,

which include (la-sogs) the ten male and female consorts forming the great assembly of (-'i tshogs chen-po) five male wrathful deities (khro-bo) and five Krodheśvarīs or female wrathful deities (khro-mo), with those of the intermediaries (pho-nya) through whom their rites are attained, namely, the eight Mātarīs of the sense-objects, their retainers (phyag-brnyan) who are the eight Piśācīs of the sensory locations, their attendants (bka'-nyan) who are the four female gatekeepers of pristine cognition, and the [other] (sogs) servants (ci-bgyi), i.e., the twenty-eight mighty mistresses or Ísvarīs who perform the rites.[1] Thereupon, the rites (las-rnams) of wrath which eradicate malign beings and so forth are provisionally [perfected] (rdzogs-par-byed) and the accomplishment (dngos-grub) of the supreme excellent Intention will conclusively and certainly be achieved.

The second section (of this detailed exegesis) concerns the sequences through which (the feast-offerings) are attained: They are attained in accordance with the maṇḍala of either a single cluster (of deities), of three clusters, of five clusters, or of the expanse of indestructible reality (vajradhātumaṇḍala).[2]

[i. The first of these has two parts, of which the former concerns the Individuals by whom (the single cluster) is attained. (It comments on Ch. 11.21):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these classes of deities forming the wrathful maṇḍala of the fifty-eight “Blood-drinkers,” see below. Ch. 15

[2]:

On the vajradhātumaṇḍala, see also above. Ch. 9, note 120, and below, pp. 943-944.

Text 11.21-22 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.21-22]

The Yogin or Mantrin, [21] in terms of accomplishment.
Abides in a disposition of spontaneous sameness and perfection;
And through conduct, unimpeded in all respects,
All things are primordial and indivisible.
All maṇḍalas are within the enlightened family
Of Indestructible reality.
The Yogin should excellently meditate
That they emanate light and blaze forth.
And this should be dissolved without attachment.

Transformed, without duality.
That one obtains the great seal. [22]

[Tibetan]

rnal-'byor sngags-'chang [21] dngos-grub-ni /
mnyam-rdzogs lhun-grub ngang-gnas-shing /
spyod-pa ci-la'ang thogs-med-pa'i /
thams-cad ye-nas dbyer-med-pa'o /
rdo-rje rigs-su thams-cad dkyil /
'od-'phro 'bar-bar rab-tu bsgom /
chags-med tshul-gyis bstim-par-bya /
gnyis-med gyur-nas phyag-rgya che / [22]

Commentary:

The second section (of this detailed exegesis) concerns the sequences through which (the feast-offerings) are attained: They are attained in accordance with the maṇḍala of either a single cluster (of deities), of three clusters, of five clusters, or of the expanse of indestructible reality (vajradhātumaṇḍala).[1]

[i. The first of these has two parts, of which the former concerns the Individuals by whom (the single cluster) is attained. (It comments on Ch. 11.21):]

The type of individual who attains this (single cluster) is the Yogin (rnal-'byor). i.e. one who "unites" ('byor) the Intellect in reality for the sake of the "fundamental" (rnal) mind-as-such. When (Yogins) are classified, there are three types, namely, Yogins of the natural ground, Yogins of the creation and perfection stages according to the path, and Yogins of the spontaneously present result. Among them, this passage refers to the yogins of the path.

The Two Stages (T. 41771) also speaks of:

The Yogin who has created and perfected
The modes of the ground and the natural result...

And in the Madhyamaka:[2]

It refers to some who would attain enlightenment,
Endowed with the nucleus of emptiness and compassion.

Or alternatively, (the individual concerned) should be a Mantrin (sngags-'chang), i.e. one who "upholds" ('chang) the words and meanings of the "mantras" (sngags) which are the profound marvelous secret of the Tathāgata. The (Tibetan) term sngags is derived from (the Sanskrit) mantra. Three kinds of mantra are upheld, namely, secret mantras (guhyamantra), gnostic mantras (vidyāmantra), and incantations (dhāraṇī). The first of these affords protection from the suffering of saṃsāra because it refers to the secret and marvelous view, meditation, conduct and result of the outer and inner (vehicles). The second affords

protection from suffering through the mighty awareness of anchorites (ṛsis) and so forth, who have obtained power over contemplation. The third comprises truthful expressions (bden-tshig) and protective expressions (bgos-pa'i tshig) which bring about their appropriate results, beneficial or harmful.[3]

[The latter concerns the accomplishment which these individuals are to attain. (It comments on Ch. 11.22):]

In terms of accomplishment (dngos-grub-ni), the Yogin acquires excellent enlightened attributes which are supreme and common. He abides in a disposition (ngang-gnas) where all things are spontaneous (lhun-grub) and indivisible in their nature of primordial sameness (mnyam) and their disposition of great perfection (rdzogs), without partiality or subjective attachment. Through conduct (spyod-pas) without acceptance and rejection, the yogin attains the realisation that all things (thams-cad) are primordially (ye-nas) of a single essence and Indivisible (dbyer-med-pa'o), unimpeded (thogs-med-pa'i) and without attachment or clinging in all respects (ci-la'ang). The maṇḍalas (dkyil) of all (thams-cad) enlightened families are gathered within the enlightened family of indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i rigs-su) or Buddha-mind, which is the maṇḍala attained in this context. Consequently, the Yogin should excellently meditate that (rab-tu-bsgom) all the deities and their celestial palaces emanate (phro) light ('od) rays of pristine cognition and blaze forth ('bar-bar) their brilliance. These should then be (bya) delighted with the divine offerings which are made to deities, without attachment (chags-med tshul-gyis) for, or clinging to, all the desired attributes, and then be dissolved (bstim-par). The result is that, transformed into (gyur-nas) the Buddha-body of reality where mind-as-such is without duality (gnyis-med), that one obtains the rank of the spontaneous great seal (phyag-rgya che). [4]

[ii. The second, concerning the maṇḍala of three clusters, (comments on Ch. 11.23):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the vajradhātumaṇḍala, see also above. Ch. 9, note 120, and below, pp. 943-944.

[2]:

N.L.

[3]:

On these three kinds of mantra, see also above, p. 123, note 226.

[4]:

The words “in this context” indicate the single cluster of deities, which represents the vajrakula or Buddha-mind, in contrast to those of three or five clusters which follow. On the status of an "awareness-holder of the great seal" (phyag-chen rig-'dzin), see pp. 959-962.

Text 11.23 (Commentary)

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[Guhya garbha-Tantra, Text section 11.23]

Alternatively, the Yogin (should attain) the nature
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind—
All (Buddhas) without exception
Are Buddha-body, speech and mind.
In contemplation, they emanate rays of light
Which radiate and blaze forth,
And which are dissolved in the disposition
Of the non-dual expanse.
Then the supreme accomplishment of
The awareness-holder will be obtained.
All maṇḍalas without exception will blaze forth.
The suffering of conflicting emotions will be dispelled,
And (beings) will be born into the enlightened family
Of indestructible reality. [23]

[Tibetan]

yang-na sku-gsung-thugs nyid-de /
thams-cad ma-lus sku-gsung-thugs /
ting-'dzin gsal-'bar 'od-zer 'phro /
gnyis-med dbyings-kyi ngang-du thim /
rig-'dzin dngos-grub mchog thob-'gyur /
dkyil-khor ma-lus 'bar-bar 'grub /
nyon-mongs sdug-bsngal sel-bar mdzad /
rdo-rje'i rigs-su skye-ba'i gnas / [23]

Commentary:

[Concerning the maṇḍala of three clusters:]

Apart from that previous (maṇḍala-cluster) the Yogin should alternatively (yang-na) attain the nature (nyid-de) of the maṇḍalas of Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) which are respectively those of Akṣobhya, Amitābha, and Vairocana. This is because the maṇḍalas of all (thams-cad) Buddhas without exception (ma-lus), when condensed, are gathered in the maṇḍalas of Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs). Also in contemplation (ting-'dzin) of the creation and perfection stages which brings about the attainment, the Yogin meditates that they emanate rays of light ('od-zer 'phro) which radiate (gsal) in the form of the deities and blaze forth ('bar) their major and

minor marks. Thereby, acts of benefit are performed for the sake of sentient beings. All the desired attributes, which are considered to be their female consorts, are enjoyed by the male consorts, so that these are all thought to become dissolved in the disposition (ngang-du thim) of the (-kyi) natural non-dual (gnyis-med) expanse (dbyings) of reality, free from conceptual elaboration.

Then, the result is that the supreme accomplishment of the awareness-holder (rigs-'dzin dngos-grub mchog) of spontaneous presence will be obtained (thob-'gyur), and thereafter, all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the deities without exception (ma-lus) will blaze forth ('bar-ba 'grub) the glory of their enlightened attributes for the sake of those to be trained, the suffering of conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs sdug-bsngal) experienced by sentient beings without exception will be dispelled (sel-bar-mdzad), and then the enlightened activity will be achieved, establishing that these sentient beings will be born into the enlightened family of Indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i rigs-su skye-ba'i gnas).

[iii. The third, concerning the maṇḍala of five clusters, (comments on Ch. 11.24):]

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Text 11.24 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.24]

For genuine accomplishment, the Mantrin
Should meditate without attachment
On skillful means and discriminative awareness,
And by all means upon the five maṇḍalas
And the row of wrathful deities.
These should be dissolved without dichotomy.
And the nucleus of supreme accomplishment will be achieved. [24]

[Tibetan]

sngags-'chang dngos-grub yang-dag-ni /
thabs-dang shes-rab thams-cad-kyis /
dkyil-'khor lnga-dang khro-'phreng bsgom /
chags-pa med-pa'i tshul-gyis-ni /
gnyis-su med-par bstim-par-bya /
dngos-grub mchog-gi snying-po 'grub / [24]

Commentary:

[Concerning the maṇḍala of five clusters:]

This section also has two parts, namely the type of individual who

attains this maṇḍala and the manner of the attainment: For genuine accomplishment (dngos-grub yang-dag-pa-ni) to be obtained in the mind, the Yogin who is a Mantrin (sngags-'chang) radiantly visualises the male and female consorts as skillful means and discriminative awareness (thabs-dang shes-rab) and should meditate on (bsgom) the five maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor lnga) of clusters and (dang) the row of wrathful deities (khro-phreng) outside them, by all means (thams-cad-kyis) of ritual, including the three kinds of contemplation. Without attachment (chags-pa med-pa'i tshul-gyis-ni) to the desired attributes, these should be dissolved (bstim-par-bya) without (med-par) clinging to the offering in terms of the subject-object dichotomy (gnyis), and in accordance with the dissolution of deity into deity. The result is that the nucleus of supreme accomplishment (dngos-grub mchog-gi snying-po), the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, will be achieved ('grub).

There are some who hold that there are different accomplishments, i.e. that the awareness-holder of the seal is attained by means of the single cluster, the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan by means of the three clusters, and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence by means of the five clusters. There is no such implication here because, through each of these clusters, one provisionally becomes accomplished as the three (lower) kinds of awareness-holder, and conclusively accomplished as the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence.[1]

[iv. The fourth, concerning the attainment of the maṇḍala of the Indestructible expanse (vajradhātumaṇḍala—comments on Ch. 11.25):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This preceding section is known as the appendix of attainment in twenty-two pādas. See p. 662.

Text 11.25 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.25]

The Yogin, by means of skillful means
And discriminative awareness,
Should meditate on the Tathāgatas
And their female consorts;
And he should meditate on the nature of
The male and female spiritual warriors.
These emanate a multitude of light-rays. [25]

[Tibetan]

rnal-'byor thabs-dang shes-rab-kyis /
de-bzhin-gshegs-dang yum-du bsgom /
sems-dpa' sems-ma nyid-du bsgom /
'od-zer rnam-pa mang-po 'phro / [25]

Commentary:

[Concerning the attainment of the maṇḍala of the Indestructible expanse (vajradhātumaṇḍala):]

This also has two parts, namely, the type of individual by whom it is attained and the manner of attainment. The Yogin (rnal-'byor), by means of (-kyis) skillful means (thabs) which is naturally represented by the male consort and (dang) discriminative awareness (shes-rab) which is naturally represented by the female consort, should meditate on the (-du-bsgom) five Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) and (dang) their five respective female consorts (yum); and he should meditate on (-du-bsgom) the sense-organs and aggregates of thought as the nature of the male and female spiritual warriors (sems-dpa' sems-ma-nyid), alone with the male and female gatekeepers. These deities also emanate ('phro) a profusion or multitude (rnam-pa mang-po) of light rays ('od-zer) throughout the ten directions.

In the sPar-khab Commentary (P. 4718) this is said to be the condensed Magical Net, comprising a maṇḍala of eighteen deities. Although there is no contradiction, according to the root-text Itself it is the maṇḍala of the forty-two conquerors which is radiantly visualised.[1]

[The Branches of Means for Attainment connected with the Feast-Offerings (416.2-419.1):]

The third part (of the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness of the path which are to be experientially cultivated, see p. 896) concerns the branches of means for attainment (connected with the feast-offerings). There are three parts.

[i. The first, the branch of contemplation which is attained, (comments on Ch. 11.26):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The eighteen deity maṇḍala is that of the single cluster, enumerated above. Ch. 9. pp. 797-798, 937.

Text 11.26 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.26]

Their respective mantras, seals

And contemplations radiate

Genuinely and differently. [26]

[Tibetan]

so-so'i sngags-dang phyag-rgya-dang /
ting-'dzin yang-dag so-sor gsal / [26]

Commentary:

[The Branches of Means for Attainment connected with the Feast-Offerings (416.2-419.1):]

The third part (of the maṇḍalas of skillful means and discriminative awareness of the path which are to be experientially cultivated, see p. 896) concerns the branches of means for attainment (connected with the feast-offerings). There are three parts.

[i. The first, the branch of contemplation which is attained, (comments on Ch. 11.26):]

When all things are attained in the maṇḍala, the outer and inner objects which are experienced as the body, its rapture and so forth, as well as the self which experiences them are displayed through the maṇḍala. Consequently, one should know that the respective mantras, seals and (so-so'i snags-dang chyag-rgya-dang) contemplations (ting-'dzin) which are provisionally assumed radiate differently (so-sor-gsal), incontrovertibly, genuinely (yang-dag), and distinctly.

[ii. The second, concerning the way in which this branch Is appropriately attained, (comments on Ch. 11.27):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.27]

One who is well endowed
With the locations and enjoyments,
Whichever are pleasing,
And an intellect without degeneration,
Should firstly act as if taking a vow.
And when propitiation has been performed,
Without laziness and langour,
And without hesitation.
That (Yogin) will accomplish all maṇḍalas,
And obtain the supreme, genuine,
Secret of indestructible reality. [27]

[Tibetan]

gnas-dang longs-spyod ci-bde-dang /
ma-nyams blo-ni rab-ldan-pas /
dang-por dam-nos bzhin-du bya /
le-lo sgyid-snyom-med-pa-yi /
the-tshom med-par bsgrub-byas-na /
dkyil-'khor thams-cad 'grub-par 'gyur /
rdo-rje gsang-mchog dam-pa 'thob / [27]

Commentary:

[Concerning the way in which this branch Is appropriately attained:]

The Yogin should find the locations (gnas-dang) suitable for this attainment, endowed with complete characteristics and without obstacles, and obtain the necessary enjoyments (langs-spyod-dang), whichever are pleasing (ci bde-dang) without falling into the two extremes.[1] Exemplified thereby, one who is well endowed with (rab-ldan-pas) the

implements, supports, sacraments of commitment and other suitable requisites which assist this attainment, complete and without degeneration (ma-nyams), and without contradictions, and whose Intellect (blo-ni) in the course of this attainment is not captivated by extraneous conditions, but established in and resigned to a single goal, should firstly (dang-por) at the beginning of the means for attainment act (bya) firmly, as if taking (nos bzhin-du) a vow (dam) with the following thought at its inception, "Until I have success, I must not roam from this seat, from this posture or location."

Then the Yogin cultivates perseverance during the course of the attainment, without (med-pa-yi) a trace of effort with respect to extraneous activities, or of bad signs and omens, or of fatigue because nothing is happening, of Idleness (le-lo) due to the self-indulgent thought that he would not succeed, and of langour (sgyid-snyoms) through which attainment emerges slowly and unpunctually, and through which physical and verbal distractions are indulged. Then, without (med-par) hesitation (the-tshom) and doubts, such as wondering whether something is or is not mantra, contemplation and so forth, or whether the result will or will not emerge, when the propitiation has been performed (bsgrub-byas-na) with an attitude profoundly established in a single assured goal, that Yogin will accomplish all maṇḍalas (dkyil-khor thams-cad 'grub-par-'gyur) which are propitiated, and will obtain ('thob) the supreme (mchog) secret of indestructible reality (rdo-rje gsang), the genuine (dam-pa) body of reality where buddha-body and pristine cognition are without conjunction or disjunction.

[iii. The third, the branch concerning the time within which attainment will occur (comments on Ch. 11.28):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the appropriate locations for these rites, see above. Ch. 9, pp. 756-758. and below. Ch. 20, p. 1272.

Text 11.28 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.28]

The days and dates for attainment

Are explained according to

Their description in the Tantras. [28]

[Tibetan]

bsgrub-pa'i zhag-dang chos-grangs-ni /

Commentary:

[Concerning the time within which attainment will occur:]

The days (zhag) suitable for attainment (bsgrub-pa'i) are stated in the verses which begin (Ch. 9.32):

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months...

These, and the dates (dang tshe-grangs-ni) for beginning the rite of attainment, together with the (auspicious) planets and stars, are to be explained (bshad) according to their description (smos-pa bzhin-du) in the (-las) Extensive Tantra (NGB. Vol. 14) as follows:

As to time, beginning on the eight day
Of the bright half (of the month).
And above all in the constellation of Puṣyā.
One Intensively practices the conduct
Associated with enlightenment.
In order that the accomplishment
Of the supreme secret should thereby be obtained.
It should indeed be received under
An auspicious planet and star.

Is it not, one might ask. Incorrect to recognise (these times) because (the Yogin) should be without acceptance and rejection? Although in essence that is the case, one should begin at an auspicious time owing to the coincidence whereby the relative causes and results are not mistaken, and one should not begin at an Inauspicious time. One should know this to resemble the planting of seeds which occurs during a season of heat and moisture, but not in another season.

It says in the Flash of Splendour (t. 830):

Derived from the branches of science.
The times which should be known
Are the auspicious days for the deities.
The excellent conjunctions and hours.
Although these are of course symbolically conceived.
The tokens and signs of accomplishment do emerge.

There are those (among you) of diminished perception and consciousness, who, having surrounded their lofty citadel of error and its walls of hesitation with a perimeter which is hard to cross, say, "This Secret Nucleus of yours is not a Tantra because it indicates (other) Tantras (as an authority)". However, the Supreme Tantra of Clear Expression (T. 369), the Hevajra Tantra (T. 417-8) and so forth which you independently uphold would, also by implication, not be tantras because they too indicate other tantras (as authorities).

The latter Indeed says for example:[1]

But why say more?

One should perform this in accordance with

The maṇḍala-ritual from the Summation of the Real.

The Tantra of Mañjuśrī (T. 543) also indicates (other authorities) when it says:

According to the great Tantra of the Magical Net...

Therefore, the Teacher (Śākyamuni) rejected hierarchical statements concerning the nature of the tantras which he equally taught.

Here too, the ancillary tantras and commentaries which derive from this root tantra (of the Secret Nucleus) are indicated and mentioned (as authorities) in connection with the rites of attainment.

[Summary of the Chapter (419.1-419.6)]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 11.29):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Hevajra Tantra. II, V, 57.

Text 11.29 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 11.29]

—Such were his words of indestructible reality. With these words, the Tathāgata held meaningful discourse with the Tathāgata himself. This completes the eleventh chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Maṇḍala of the Feast Offerings. [29]

[Tibetan]

—rdo-rje gsang-ba'i tshig-tu'o /

-zhes de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid ched-du
gleng-ngo / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las tshogs-kyi
dkyil-'khor-gyi le'u-ste bcu-gcig-pa'o / [28]

Commentary:

[Summary of the Chapter (419.1-419.6)]

Because all things are primordially pure in the display of Samantabhadra, (the feast-offering) is to be performed, without acceptance and rejection—Such were his words (tshig-tu'o) in this tantra, the essence of secret indestructible reality (rdo-rje gsang-ba'i). At the time when he spoke with these words (zhes), all the self-manifesting appearances of the spontaneous Bounteous Array were not extraneous to the Buddhas' display, and so the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyid) is said to have held meaningful discourse (ched-du gleng-ngo) with the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la), indicating that there is no duality of object and subject. in this way, all things are revealed to be self-manifesting; and that which is self-manifesting is revealed to be the non-dual intrinsic mind-as-such, substantially uncreated, in the manner of a dream.

This completes ('o) the exegesis of the eleventh chapter (le'u-ste bcu-gcig-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of reality, Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) display of pristine cognition, in which it manifests. It is entitled the meaning of the Maṇḍala of Feast Offerings (tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor) in which all things that appear are made Into the path of skillful means and discriminative awareness by the gathering of all Yogins who have appropriate view and conduct, by the free enjoyment of the implements possessed by these (yogins), by the timely gathering of the meditational deities, Ḍākinīs and oath-bound protectors, and by the perfection of the two provisions in the mind, without clinging or apprehension.

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Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, emanated a cloud of his display, became equipoised in the contemplation of "the array of ornaments", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

With firm contemplation in the manifestly perfect
Mandala of the Magical Net: [2]

By the seal which absorbs and emanates
The dance steps and gesticulations.
One Binks down or traverses the sky. [3]

By the seals of song, verses, and intonations.
One will obtain the accomplishment of the doctrine. [4]

By the seal which assumes ornaments and raiment.
One will accomplish (the status of) the king
Who blazes forth, and which cannot be matched. [5]

By the seal of food and drink,
One will become accomplished in
The wish-fulfilling buddha-body and nectar. [6]

By the seal of "vowels" and "consonants,"
Each and every (activity) will be achieved. [7]

Retention endowed with characteristics
Of awareness and entrance,
Is the basis and condition
Which brings the result to maturity.
Those who transform it into a potent force [8]
Are known as awareness-holders.
In the field of the conqueror. [9]

Although they assume the pure birth
Of humans, gods and Brahmā gods, [10]
They are transformed into the extraordinary levels.
And the transcendental perfections are totally completed. [11]

The extraordinary levels, namely the ten and the three
Which respectively have skillful means,
Supreme skillful means and discriminative awareness.
And that which is supreme for its supreme discriminative awareness
Are spontaneously perfect through their distinctions
Of cause and result. [12]

One should meditate that on cushions of sun and moon.
In the expanse of the clear maṇḍala of the sky.
There is the king of pristine cognition,

In union with his consort;
Thus one comes to meditate without exception
On all maṇḍalas of the conquerors, in their entirety. [13]

From any of the four times and ten directions.
The perfect buddha will not be found.
Mind-as-such is the perfect Buddha.
Do not search elsewhere for the Buddha. [14]

One should be well united in the maṇḍala,
Samantabhadra, So that all maṇḍalas will be accomplished. [15]

Whether the rituals are abundant or incomplete,
Flaws are themselves pure, and there is no defect. [16]

—Through this meaningful expression, (the Tathāgatas) were pleased by the cloud of that display. This completes the twelfth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled the Attainment of the Feast-Offerings. [17]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.1]

Then the Tathāgata, the Great Joyous One, emanated a cloud of his display, became equipoised in the contemplation of "the array of ornaments", and then uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa dgyes-pa chen-pos rol-mo'i sprin rnam-par
spros-te / rgyan bkod-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas ched-du
brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (419.6-439.3):]

The second section (of the teaching on the creation stage which reverses common attachments—see p. 889) is an exegesis of the particular branches of that (maṇḍala of feast-offerings). It has three parts, namely: the background motivation; an exegesis of the meaning of its words; and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 12.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of the feast-offerings had been explained, then the Tathāgata (de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa), the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) Samantabhadra, in whom all things are displayed without

duality, emanated (rnam-par spros-te) all things of phenomenal existence throughout the infinity of space as a cloud of (-i sprin) his display (rol-mo) of pristine cognition, wherein all that is desired emerges spontaneously and perfectly by nature. He became equipoised (snyoms-par zhugs) in the contemplation (ting-nge-'dzin-la) of the "array (bkod-pa'i) of ornaments" (rgyan) which are greatly enjoyed throughout the perceptual range of the Buddha-fields and the six classes of living beings, corresponding to their respective perceptions. And then (nas) he uttered (brjod-do) these ('di) naturally arisen meaningful expressions (ched-du brjod-pa), without being encouraged or requested to do so, to the assembled array which is a pure self-manifestation of the Teacher himself.

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (420.4-439.1):]

This has three parts: a general teaching on the contemplation of the feast-offerings along with their beneficial attributes; a particular exegesis of the result attained through the feastoofferings; and a synopsis of the great all-gathering maṇḍala which supports the feast-offerings.

[General Teaching on the Contemplation of the Feast-Offerings and their Beneficial Attributes (420. 5-424.2):]

The first of these includes both a brief teaching and an extensive explanation.

[i. The former (comments on Ch. 12.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.2]

With firm contemplation in the manifestly perfect
Mandala of the Magical Net: [2]

[Tibetan]

sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i mngon-rdzogs-pa'i /
dkyil-'khor brtan-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin / [2]

Commentary:

[Exegesis of the Meaning of its Words (420.4-439.1):]

This has three parts: a general teaching on the contemplation of the feast-offerings along with their beneficial attributes; a particular exegesis of the result attained through the feastoofferings; and a synopsis of the great all-gathering maṇḍala which supports the feast-offerings.

[General Teaching on the Contemplation of the Feast-Offerings and their Beneficial Attributes (420. 5-424.2):]

The first of these includes both a brief teaching and an extensive explanation.

[i. The former (comments on Ch. 12.2):]

All things abide in the manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa'i) maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of male and female deities, in a great coalescence of subject and object, or of male and female consort, as the essence of the Magical Met (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i), which is a display of pristine cognition. With the emanation and absorption of firm contemplation (brtan-pa 'i ting-nge-'dzin) on that very object, radiantly visualised and experienced by the intellect, the supreme and common accomplishments will be achieved.

[ii. The latter (the extensive explanation) has five sections, among which (the first) comprises the contemplation of dancesteps and gesticulations along with its beneficial attributes. (It comments on Ch. 12.3):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.3]

By the seal which absorbs and emanates
The dance steps and gesticulations.
One sinks down or traverses the sky. [3]

[Tibetan]

bro-gar 'du-'phro-i phyag-rgya-yis /
'dzul-lam nam-mkhar 'gro-bar 'gyur / [3]

Commentary:

[ii. The latter (the extensive explanation) has five sections, among which (the first) comprises the contemplation of dance-steps and gesticulations along with its beneficial attributes. (It comments on Ch. 12.3):]

This contemplation visually creates the five limbs of the body including the head as the maṇḍala of the five enlightened families. The location is venerated as the nature of the indestructible ground, and the house as a pure Buddha-field, adorned with the celestial palace of the deity. in that disposition which absorbs and emanates ('du-'phro'i) the diverse seals

including the dance-steps (bro) of the feet and gesticulations (gar) of the hands, and in which the form of the deity, indivisible from the Magical Net, is known to be without true inherent existence, all movements and postures (of the body) and configurations of the hands do not transgress the nature of the deity. Therefore, all activities connected with dance-steps and gesticulations whatsoever are expressed in the term "seal" (phyag-rgya); and this seal is held to include the stretching and contracting of the fingers.[1]

As for its beneficial attributes: By (yis) such activity, one sinks down ('dzul) within the earth and overpowers those mudrās who are nāginīs below the earth by passing unimpededly through mountains and rocks, or one unimpededly traverses ('gro-bar 'gyur) the sky (lam nam-mkhar) above in the manner of a bird, and so comes to overpower the gods, antigods and so forth.

[The second, concerning the seal of songs, (comments on Ch. 12.4):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This first section concerns the sealing of the body with the dance-movements and hand-gestures of the respective deities, on which, see above. Ch. 8.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.4]

By the seals of song, verses, and intonations.

One will obtain the accomplishment of the doctrine. [4]

[Tibetan]

glu-tshig sgra-yi phyag-rgya-yis /
chos-kyi dngos-grub thob-par 'gyur / [4]

Commentary:

[Concerning the seal of songs, (comments on Ch. 12.4):]

It also has two aspects. As to contemplation, this contemplation arrays the syllable HRIḤ within the throat, and makes offerings to the deities of the maṇḍala by the seals (phyag-rgya-yis) of sweet melody and sons (glu), of its verses (tshig), and of other intonations (sgra-yi) of praise, benediction and so forth.

As to its beneficial attributes: One will obtain the accomplishment (dngos-grub thob-par-'gyur) of the conch-shell of the doctrine (chos-kyi), which can understand things through a single inexhaustible wheel of adornment, the Buddha-speech.

Accordingly, it says in the Sūtra which Reveals the Diffusion Light-Rays Everywhere (T. 55):

I also have rays of light,
Which are called the conch-shell of doctrine.
These entirely fill the world
By understanding everything as a single melody.
The meritorious basis of those rays of light
Arises from their inestimable nature.

Now, the buddha-speech is heard by whichever beings there are who require training, corresponding to their volition, and without reference to those who are near and those who are far. There is no difference whether one is present within the (teaching) courtyard or far beyond all the sands of the River Ganges. Just so, when Maudgalyāyana went to the world-system of Marīcīkā in the west, he heard the doctrine of Śākyamuni as before, whereas, according to the Sūtra of the Cornucopia of Avalokiteśvara's Attributes (T. 116), unfortunate beings did not hear him even when seated within the assembly. Indeed at Jetāvana, Śākyamuni was heard by Bodhisattvas and yet not by any of his pious attendants.[1]

[The third, concerning the seal of ornaments and raiment, (comments on Ch. 12.5):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On Maudgalyāyana's visit to Marīcīkā, see Divyāvadāna, pp. 52ff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.5]

By the seal which assumes ornaments and raiment.
One will accomplish (the status of) the king
Who blazes forth, and which cannot be matched. [5]

[Tibetan]

rgyan-dang bgo-ba'i phyag-rgya-yis /
'bar-ba'i rgyal-po thub-med 'grub / [5]

[The third, concerning the seal of ornaments and raiment, (comments on Ch. 12.5):]

As for contemplation, this contemplation radiantly visualises that, derived from the syllable TRĀṂ, the crown and other such ornaments become gemstones; and, derived from the syllable A, the garments are consecrated as the garments of the deities and the garb of the peaceful and wrathful deities. This is implemented by the seal (phyag-rgya-yis) which assumes the ornaments (rgyan) including gemstones and bones, and (dang) the raiment (bgo-ba'i) of upper and lower garments and so forth.

As for its beneficial attributes: Provisionally one will be clad in solid armour, which is luminous, brilliant, and cannot be destroyed even by Nārāyaṇa;[1] and conclusively one will become a universal monarch, and a bodhisattva who blazes forth ('bar-ba'i) with major and minor marks, and then one will accomplish ('grub) (the status of) the buddha-body, the king (rgyal-po) who holds sway over them with his ten powers which cannot be matched (thub-med) by Māra or by any disputant.[2]

The energy comprised by these ten powers accords with the description found in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93) which says that one athlete is much stronger than seven human beings of Jambudvīpa, and similarly, one Śākya youth is stronger than seven athletes. The antigods are superior to seven of these, and the gods, Yaksas, Nārāyaṇa, pious attendants, self-centred Buddhas, and bodhisattvas are (successively) superior to seven of their immediate predecessors in power and skills. Meanwhile, the Buddhas surpass in power all those beings who fill the expanse of space.

[The fourth, concerning the seal of food and drink, (comments on Ch. 12.6):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Nārāyaṇa (sred-med-kyi bu), a proverbially mighty being, often Identified with Viṣṇu, on whom see the definitions in F. Edgerton, Dictionary of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. The point of this passage is that even the status of a śrāvaka surpasses that of the highest gods of the kamadhātu.

[2]:

These daśatathāgatabala are enumerated above. Ch. 1, pp. 384-385.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.6]

By the seal of food and drink,
One will become accomplished in
The wish-fulfilling Buddha-body and nectar. [6]

[Tibetan]

bza'-dang btung-ba'i phyag-rgya-yis /
yid-bzhin sku-dang bdud-rtsi 'grub / [6]

Commentary:

[The fourth, concerning the seal of food and drink, (comments on Ch. 12.6):]

As for contemplation, this contemplation consecrates the food & drink derived from the syllable KHAM as nectar. By the seal (phyag-rgya-yis) of food (bza') including fish and meat, and drink (dang btung-ba'i) including tea and ale, offerings are made to the outer and inner deities.

As for its beneficial attributes: One's own body will become accomplished ('grub) in the Buddha-body (sku), like the wishfulfilling (yid-bzhin) gem which brings about all that is desired, and (dang) one will become accomplished in the supreme savours of buddha-speech, the nectar (bdud-rtsi), endowed with a hundred savours, which anyone may enjoy.

[The fifth, concerning the contemplation of the seal of the rites of sexual union and "liberation", (comments on Ch. 12.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.7]

By the seal of "vowels" and "consonants,"
Each and every (activity) will be achieved. [7]

[Tibetan]

ā-li kā-li'i phyag-rgya-yis /
thams-cad thams-cad 'grub-par 'gyur / [7]

Commentary:

[The fifth, concerning the contemplation of the seal of the rites of

sexual union and "liberation", (comments on Ch. 12.7):]

This contemplation is one in which the male and female consorts are radiantly visualised as deities and the maṇḍala is invited Into their secret centres. There, the maṇḍala should be pleased by the seal (phyag-rgya-yis) of the "vowels" (ā-li) which make offerings of the supreme bliss, and of the "consonants" (kā-li) which perform rites of "liberation", making offerings of human and non-human flesh and blood which are turned into nectar.[1]

The beneficial attributes (of this contemplation) are that each (thams-cad) supreme and common accomplishment, Including that of the uncorrupted contemplation, will be achieved ('grub-par-'gyur) through the rite of sexual union, as will every (thams-cad) enlightened activity which eradicates malign beings, pacifies naturally occurring evil forces, and releases (beings) into the next life, and so forth by the rites of "liberation".

[Particular Exegesis of the Result Attained through the Feast-Offerings (424.2-435-4):]

Secondly (see p. 954), the particular exegesis of the results attained through the feast-offerings Includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview (424.2-430.6):]

This comprises both verbal definition and classification: According to the (Sanskrit) term vidyādhara, vidyā means awareness, which is the seed of discriminative awareness, pristine cognition, and Buddha-hood. Dhara means holding or maintaining, i.e., the study or possession of (awareness) as an object.

The classification comprises both a general teaching which is illustrative (of the resultant awareness-holders), and a particular exegesis of their natural expression.

Concerning the former, it says in the Fulfillment and Confession of the Denizens of Hell (na-ra-ka skong-bshags):

They have maturation, power over the lifespan.
The (great) seal, and spontaneous presence.

Thus, there is the awareness-holder of maturation, the awarenessholder with power over the lifespan, the awareness-holder of the great seal, and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence.[2]

The first of them is endowed with three characteristics. namely, maturation in the yoga of the meditational deity, stability in the form of the maturational body, and, on association with the seal of the body (lus-rgya = karmamudrā), the Buddha-body of the great seal is obtained.[3]

It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Having grasped the form of the meditational deity,

And untied the knots by means of the seal of the body,
The Buddha-body of the (great) seal will itself become radiant.
That is said to be maturation.

The second (the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan) transforms that maturational body into the body of indestructible reality, and without abandoning it, unites with the buddha-level so that there is no corruption of the components and the intelligence of pristine cognition is cultivated.

As the same text says:

One endowed with body and components
Attains the awareness with power to keep them.
And, through the emergence of higher realisation.
Passes away without relinquishing the body.
This is the great awareness.
Wherein all corruption has ceased.
Whatever is practised, there is no reversal.
One who has obtained independence
Obtains inspiration, and so at this juncture
Perceives the middling degree of truth.[4]

According to the third (the awareness-holder of the great seal), one's own body is transformed into the guise of (the deity) on whom one has meditated.

It says in the Answers to the Questions of Vajrasattva (p. 5082):

The deity actualised by meditation
On one's own body as the great seal
Of the conquerors,
Endowed with major and minor marks.
And supernormal cognitive powers,
Is known as the awareness-holder
Of the great seal.

If one were to think that Buddha-hood has then been actualised, it is still to be attained because that (awareness-holder) is not free from all obscurations. One should know this to resemble the assertion of the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786), concerning the "attainment of Buddha-hood", that although Buddha-hood is obtained on the first level, there are still stains to be purified on the remaining levels.[5]

The Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) also says:

Although the Buddha-body with the guise
Of the seal of enlightenment
Manifests that guise.
Endowed with major and minor marks and so forth.
The real nature of quiescence is not perceived.

The fourth (the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence) is the

Buddha-hood in which renunciation and realisation are concluded.[6]

It says in the Indestructible Reality:

Through the perfection of the power
Derived from the previous awareness,
Stains are purified, as has been explained.
And one becomes an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence
Endowed with the three kinds of discriminative awareness
Of the Buddha-level.[7]

The latter, the particular exegesis of their natural expression has four parts, namely, their emanational births, their subsumption of the uncorrupted levels, their completion of the transcendental perfections, and their conclusive attainments.

i. Concerning the first: These awareness-holders perform acts of benefit for each according to his or her needs, having emanated for the sake of living beings as a universal monarch who is chief among human beings, as Brahmā, Śatakratu and so forth who are chief among the gods, and as the beings of the Mahābrahmā realms.[8] There are some who claim without contradiction that the awareness-holder of maturation is displayed among human beings, the awareness-holder of power over the lifespan among gods, the awareness-holder of the great seal among Brahmā realms, and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence among all.[9]

ii. As for their subsumption on the uncorrupted levels: the awareness-holder of maturation is subsumed in the level which concludes (the paths of) provision and connection. The awareness holder of power over the lifespan is subsumed in the levels of learning as far as the path of insight. The awareness-holder of the great seal is subsumed in the levels of extraordinary realisation on (the paths) of insight and meditation, which concern the sublime pristine cognition; and the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence is subsumed in the Buddha-level.[10]

However all of these are subsumed together on the Extraordinary (khyad-par-can) or thirteenth level. Therein they have all certainly been actualised. The distinction here resembles, for example, that between a fish which has been caught by an iron hook but is still in the water, and one which has been brought forth to dry land.[11]

Moreover, through the function of having sublime pristine cognition, one is called an awareness-holder of the great seal; and through the function of being devoid of birth and death, one is called an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan.

Again, there is explained to be a threefold division, according to which (the awareness-holders) are respectively introduced onto the Buddha-level, abide on the buddha-level, and are matured on the Buddha-level.

There are also some who hold that the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan refers to the first level, that of the great seal to the eighth, and that of spontaneous presence to the tenth, but that is not

intended according to the intention of the Magical Net, which says (Ch. 9.32):

Within sixteen lifespans (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five Buddha-bodies.

And:

Without renouncing the body, on the Buddha-level...

These passages indeed contradict the explanation that (the awareness-holder) of spontaneous presence has Buddha-hood, and they do not differentiate between the characteristics of the (awareness-holders) with power over the lifespan and of the great seal.[12]

iii. As for the third (their completion of the transcendental perfections): It is revealed that the ten transcendental perfections are gradually refined by adherents of the gradual path and that the ten levels correspondingly arise; whereas adherents of the immediate path swiftly complete these. [13] Because things are not at all grasped, the transcendental perfection of liberality and its result are revealed to be spontaneously perfected without being sought. Similarly, moral discipline is uncovered, without acceptance or rejection, through an awareness of the sameness (of all things); patience is the absence of disturbance and the total apprehension of the character of pristine cognition; perseverance is the lack of degeneration in that and the accumulation of appropriate actions and behaviour; concentration is the abiding in the nature of all things without deviating from sameness, although the sense-organs are object-oriented; discriminative awareness transcends the apprehension of substances and signs because that nature is incontrovertibly realised; skillful means is that which directs one to action for the sake of others; aspiration is that which utterly purifies fields and perceptual ranges; power is that which is never oppressed by disharmonious aspects; and pristine cognition is the qualitative realisation of the truth. Through the spontaneous perfection of these ten transcendental perfections, (their corresponding results) are swiftly perfected, without having to be refined over a long period of time.[14]

The verbal definition and the attributes of the levels are also mentioned in the following passage from the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

The Joyful Level is so called because
It gives rise to joy
At the increasing proximity of enlightenment.
And at the preception that the benefit
Of sentient beings is accomplished.
The Immaculate Level is so called
Because it is free from the stains
Of striving after indisciplined behaviour.
The Illuminator Level is so called because
It activates the great appearance of doctrine.
The Flaming Level is so called because
It burns both aspects (of obsuration)

Which are out of harmony with enlightenment.
The Hard to Conquer Level is so called because
It completely matures sentient beings.
And also protects one's own mind,
And is hard for intelligent beings to conquer.
The Manifest Level is so called because
Dependent on the perfection of discriminative awareness
Both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are thereon manifested.
The Far-Reaching Level is so called
Because it connects one with the unique path of progression.[15]
The Immovable Level is upheld
Because it is unmoved by the two kinds of perception.[16]
The Level of Excellent Intelligence
Is that of the noble intelligence of
Particularising genuine awareness.
The Cloud of Doctrine is so called because
It fills the firmament with the two cloud-like (provisions).[17]

As for their respective enlightened attributes, on the first level twelve hundred are instantly actualised, without temporal sequence, including the audience with a hundred Buddhas.

It says in the Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

One hundred contemplations and a hundred Buddhas are seen.
One hundred fields are roused and manifestly traversed.
One hundred sentient beings are refined.
And established within the door of the doctrine.
Emanating for one hundred aeons.
One hundred bodies are revealed.
And sons of the conquerors, one hundred in number.
Are also revealed.
Higher than that there are immeasurable (attributes)
Endowed with the power of supreme aspiration.

Similarly, on the second level there are twelve thousand attributes, on the third there are twelve hundred-thousand, on the fourth there are twelve billion, on the fifth there are one hundred and twenty billion, on the sixth there are twelve billion billion, on the seventh there are twelve hundred-thousand billion billion, on the eighth there are (attributes) equal to the number of atoms in one hundred-thousand chiliocosms, on the ninth there are (attributes) equal to the number of atoms in one million chiliocosms, and on the tenth there are (attributes) equal In number to (the atoms of) indescribable (chiliocosms). These include audiences with the buddhas, in which their doctrines are heard, their Buddha-fields are roused, their light is effulgent, their fields are traversed, sentient beings are matured, the gateways to the doctrines are opened, contemplations are entered with equipoise, instantaneous time-moments are revealed for many aeons, many aeons are revealed in an instantaneous time-moment, the vision of all limits of all past and future lives is penetrated, one's own body emanates as many Buddha-bodies, and each of these is revealed to be surrounded by many retinues. All these emerge instantaneously without temporal sequence.[18]

iv. The fourth concerns their attainment of the conclusive levels: Once these ten levels have been completed, the following levels are spontaneously perfected: the eleventh level. Universal Light, whereon many rays of light are diffused and one acts on behalf of sentient beings; the twelfth level. Unattached Lotus-Endowed, on which there is no attachment owing to the appearance of pristine cognition and great spirituality; and the thirteenth level which is called Holder of Indestructible Reality, or the Great Mass of Rotating Syllables, or the Great Extraordinary level, or the Awareness-holder because the conclusive power over all things is spontaneously perfected. Now this thirteenth level, from the standpoint of the buddha-body of reality free from conceptual elaboration is called the Great Extraordinary level. Derived from that disposition, it is called the Great Mass of Rotating Syllables because it is the basis for the arising of the buddha-body of perfect rapture; it is called the Holder of Indestructible Reality because it itself is the Guru of all; it is called the Awareness-holder because it is the essence of conclusive pristine cognition. Thus it is known (differently) according to the standpoints of its enlightened attributes.

These levels are without a hierarchical order as in the case of the rungs of a ladder, and are indeed the essence of the single Buddha-nature, expressed (differently) from the standpoints of the three buddha-bodies. When these too are distinguished through their enlightened attributes, there are said to be many more (synonyms).

Then, there is the fourteenth level, which is known as Supreme Bliss because it has immeasurable bliss; the fifteenth level known as Contemplation, and the sixteenth level known as Guru of Pristine Cognition. In the genuine essence, these are explained to refer to a single level because there is nothing to be accomplished or clarified. They are one in the Great Perfection, the indivisible Samantabhadra.[19]

It is said in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

Together they are the all-accomplishing enlightened mind, which...

This completes the exegesis of the overview.

[Interlinear Commentary (430.6-435.4):]

This has three parts, namely: the causal basis through which the status of an awareness-holder is accomplished; the provisional results accomplished thereby; and the conclusive result of one who has reached the goal.

[i. The first has two sections, among which the former concerning the actual causal basis (comments on Ch. 12.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Ā-li and kā-li are respective symbolic terms for the sbyor-sgrol practices. See also below. Ch. 20, p. 1272; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 167. According to Dil-mgo mKhyen-brtse Rin-po-che, the phrase "human and non-human flesh and blood" (zhing-dang zhing-phran-gyi sha-khrag) may also be rendered as "flesh and blood of those born in seven successive lives as a pure brahman [i.e., as a vegetarian], and the flesh and blood of ordinary beings." On the significance of tasting pills derived from the flesh of such seven-times born beings, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 6, p. 522, note.

[2]:

On the four kinds of vidyādhara. see also above, pp. 810-811, 853-854. and below, pp. 1247-1248; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 144ff., 160ff.

[3]:

The attainment of this maturational body or body of pure essences (vipākakāya) is contrasted here with that of the vajrakāya (rdo-rje'i sku). The former through union with a consort is said to result on its abandonment in the mahāmudrākāya (where one's body is identified with that of one's particular yi-dam). The latter, however, by transforming rather than abandoning the maturational body, has the attainment of the tshe-dbang-rig-'dzin and ultimately of the lhun-grub rig-'dzin on the Buddha-level. See also above, pp. 853-854.

[4]:

Tibetan bden-pa bar-ma. The "middling degree of truth" in the context of this Anuyoga text indicates the path of insight (darśanamārga), which subsumes the sixth bhūmi and which, on the cessation of corruptions and the transitory bliss of the prayogamārga, is said to confer great release or inspiration and the accomplishment of the divine body, coalescing bliss and emptiness. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 165b-166a.

[5]:

Cf. pp. 965-966. where, according to the Sūtrālaṃkāra, there is said to be only a "proximity to enlightenment" on the first level.

[6]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, PP. 80b-84a, where there is a discussion on the two kinds of renunciation and realisation, viz. one that is atemporally acquired and one that is dynamically acquired through the experiences of the path.

[7]:

These are "discriminative awareness produced by study" (śrutimayaprajñā), "discriminative awareness produced by thought" (cintāmayaprajñā), and "discriminative awareness produced by meditation" (bhāvanāmayaprajñā).

[8]:

The Mahābrahmā (tshangs-pa chen-po) is the third of the twelve ordinary form realms (so-skye'i gnas bcu-gnyis) attained through the caturdhyāna. See the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction.

[9]:

This entire section is reproduced in the authors' tshangs-dbyangs 'brug-sgra. pp. 61-62.

[10]:

Cf. NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 4. pp. 161b-162a, and kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, tshangs-dbyangs 'brug-sgra. P. 62.

[11]:

There is a distinction drawn between the dynamic realisation of the lhun-grub rig-'dzin which belongs to the path and the resultant realisation of the thirteenth buddha-level which is a fait accompli. See note 10 above.

[12]:

I.e. in the view of the Guhyagarbhatantra, the lhun-grub rig-'dzin is held to be attained on the path to Buddha-hood, and the phyag-rgya rig-'dzin, while not explicitly mentioned, is Implied in the descriptions of the tshe-dbang rig-'dzin.

[13]:

On the gradual acquisition of the daśapāramitā. see e.g.. Sgam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation. pp. 148-231. Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Buddhist Literature. Ch. 4, and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3.

[14]:

On the Immediate acquisition of the daśapāramitā, which accords with the view of rdzogs-pa chen-po, in addition to the present account, see also below. Ch. 13. p. 1014, and NSTB, Book 2. Pt. 7, pp. 736-758. esp. the quotations from rig-pa rang-shar-kyi rgyud (NGB. Vol 10) and the Brahaviśeṣacintiparipṛccha-Sūtra.

[15]:

Tibetan bgrod-gcig lam Indicates the eighth bhūmi, from which regression becomes impossible.

[16]:

"two kinds of perception" ('du-shes gnyis); perception which

significantly apprehends reality (don-la mtshan-mar 'dzin-pa'i 'du-shes) and perception which significantly apprehends conventional expressions (tha-snyad-la mtshan-mar 'dzin-pa).

[17]:

Tibetan sprin-bzhin gnyis: retention (zungs) and contemplation (ting-nge-dzin) which exemplify respectively puṇyasambhāra and jñānasambhāra.

[18]:

On these attributes, see also kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, tshangs-dbyangs 'brug-sgra. pp. 64-65; also, on their acquisition through sampannakrama and rdzogs-pa chen-po, see below. Ch. 13, pp. 1029ff, and especially NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 208-209.

[19]:

On the six higher or resultant levels, see also above, pp. 661, 672-673, and below, pp. 974-976, 1015.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.8]

Retention endowed with characteristics

Of awareness and entrance,

Is the basis and condition

Which brings the result to maturity.

Those who transform it into a potent force [8]

[Tibetan]

shes-'jug mtshan-nyid 'byor-pa'i gzugs /

'bras-bu smin-byed rgyu-dang rkyen /

nus mthu-can-du gang-gyur-pa / [8]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (430.6-435.4):]

This has three parts, namely: the causal basis through which the status of an awareness-holder is accomplished; the provisional results accomplished thereby; and the conclusive result of one who has reached the goal.

[i. The first has two sections, among which the former concerning the actual causal basis (comments on Ch. 12.8):]

The retention (gzungs) in the mind which is endowed with ('byor-ba'i) the abiding nature of excellent view concerning the characteristics of awareness (shes-pa'i mtshan-nyid) of the primordial Buddha-hood of all things by means of the four kinds of realisation, is the basis which brings the result to maturity ('bras-bu smin-byed rgyu) in the four kinds of awareness-holder.[1] And the retention which is endowed with the coalescence of the creation and perfection stages, characteristic of the entrance ('jug) Into attainment once that has become known, is the condition (dang-rkyen) which brings the result to maturity in the four kinds of awareness-holder; i.e. once the characteristics have been known, the result of the doctrine is acquired through attainment. Those who have experienced and become familiar with that basis and condition, and who transform them Into a (-du gang gyur-pa) particularly potent force (nus-mthu-can) will emerge as awareness-holders, from the status of maturation to that of spontaneous presence, just as a wholesome seed of causal basis when moistened by the water of condition, produces its results, which range from the shoots (of spring) to the fruits of autumn.

[The latter, concerning their subsequent modes of attainment, (comments on Ch. 12.9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For further informatin on "retention" as the causal basis for the "path of liberation" (grol-lam) in Mahāyoga, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 158.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.9]

Are known as awareness-holders.

In the field of the conqueror. [9]

[Tibetan]

rig-'dzin rgyal-ba'i zhing-du grags / [9]

Commentary:

[The latter, concerning their subsequent modes of attainment, (comments on Ch. 12.9):]

Such beings are known as (-du-grags) awareness-holders (rig-'dzin) either in the fields which give birth to the conqueror (rgyal-ba), or in the fields of (-'i zhing) the buddhas of the ten directions,[1] and they obtain

prophetic declarations to the effect that:

Thus, in such and such a world-system.
Such and such an awareness-holder will abide.
And at a specified time,
Will perform the deeds of the buddhas.

[ii. The second part concerns the provisional results accomplished thereby. There are two sections, of which the former concerns the beings who accomplish (those provisional results. It comments on Ch. 12.10):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The distinction here is again one between causal and resultant modes of Buddha-hood.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.10]

Although they assume the pure birth
Of humans, gods and Brahmā gods, [10]

[Tibetan]

mi-dang lha-dang tshangs-pa-yi /
skye-ba rnam-dag 'dzin-mod-kyang / [10]

Commentary:

[ii. The second part concerns the provisional results accomplished thereby. There are two sections, of which the former concerns the beings who accomplish (those provisional results. It comments on Ch. 12.10):]

Among those awareness-holders, there are some in the respective abodes of (-yi) the humans (mi-dang) of the four continents, of the gods (lha-dang) of the desire realm, and the Brahmā Gods (tshangs-pa) and so forth. Although they assume ('dzin mod-kyang) the pure birth (skye-ba rnam-dag) in those respective forms, faultless and excellent in enlightened attributes, there is no similarity of attributes or equality in fortune with the beings of those abodes and races, just as, for example, buddhas and bodhisattvas may both assume the bodies of different abodes and classes of living beings, although there is no similarity in their fortune or enlightened attributes.[1]

Concerning the four ways in which birth is assumed, it says in the

Ornament of the Sūtras the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):

Birth is held to be determined
Through the deeds of Intelligent beings.
Through their aspiration and power for the sake of others.
And through contemplation and mastery.

Among these (four), one is born on the ordinary levels, either into higher or evil existences by dint of good and evil deeds. One is held to be born on the levels from the first to seventh through aspiration and emanation which is learned in skillful means, and one appears to be born on the three pure levels (eighth to tenth) in order to train each according to his or her needs by contemplation and mastery. Then, on the Buddha-levels, one manifests a display of great mastery over the twelve deeds and so forth by means of spontaneously present emanations.[2]

The sublime beings are without the characteristics of birth because they have traversed the rivers of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

However, they do emanate through their spirituality, as is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

The sublime one has uprooted and abandoned
The sufferings of death, sickness and old age.
He is without them because he is without birth,
Which is determined by deeds and conflicting emotions.
Because he perceives genuine reality as it is,
He has transcended birth and so forth.
However, as an embodiment of his compassion.
He displays birth, death, old age, and sickness.

And in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

Though he is without old age, sickness and death.
He displays the transference of consciousness at death.

Now, the awareness-holder of maturation has put an end to birth determined by deeds. This is because, immediately after abandoning his body, he obtains the sublime levels and, in this way, identifies with the conclusive path of connection.

From the feeling of warmth experienced on the path of connection there are no evil existences,[3] as is said in the following verse from the section on the feeling of warmth in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):[4]

Hesitation and the absence of (the eight) freedoms are ended.

So it is that one is born through aspiration in the pure fields for the sake of living beings.

The awareness-holders of power over the lifespan and the (great) seal

perform acts of benefit through their births which are determined by contemplation, However, these births are without inherent characteristics because the body itself is transformed into the buddha-body of indestructible reality, so that there is no connection with decay.

The awareness-holder of spontaneous presence manifests the birth determined by mastery, in order to train each according to his or her needs, so that there is a diffusion of emanations.

[The latter concerning the levels in which they are subsumed, (comments on Ch. 12.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The *nirmāṇakāya* is said to appear in diverse realms and diverse forms, in the manner of the moon's reflection in water, i.e. without straying from the *dharmakāya* or *sambhogakāya*. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 50a-60a. Similarly, *Bodhisattvas* may appear in the same realms through their past aspirations. and yet they are differentiated from buddhas in their attributes and purpose. Cf. NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 3. PP. 80bff. Also, see the following paragraph.

[2]:

Among these four "ways in which birth is assumed". the first corresponds to sentient beings, the second and third to *bodhisattvas*, and the fourth to buddhas. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 80bff. On the twelve deeds (*mdzad-pa bcu-gnyis*) see above. Ch. 3, PP. 469-491.

[3]:

On this "feeling of warmth" on the *prayogamārga* (*sbyor-lam drod*), see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 130; also *kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa*, *grub-mtha'i mdzod*. pp. 142-146.

[4]:

Tibetan *the-tshom mi-dal zad-pa-dang*. The "eight freedoms" (*dal-ba bgyad*) are the freedoms from birth in the hells, as tormented spirits, animals, frontier [frontier?] tribes, long-living gods, those with erroneous views, those born in a time when there is no buddha, and the stupid. Cf. *Smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*. as quoted in *Sgam.po.pa*, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, p. 14.

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They are transformed into the extraordinary levels.
And the transcendental perfections are totally completed. [11]

[Tibetan]

khyad-par sa-la gnas-'gyur yin /
pha-rol phyin-pa kun-tu rdzogs / [11]

Commentary:

[The latter concerning the levels in which they are subsumed,
(comments on Ch. 12.11):]

The first three kinds of awareness-holder are subsumed in the causal levels, and the last kind is subsumed in the resultant levels. Because all of these are irreversible, they are subsumed in extraordinary levels.

Therefore the text says:

They are transformed (gnas-'gyur yin) into the extraordinary levels (khyad-par sa-la).

And the transcendental perfections (pha-rol phyin-pa) are totally completed (kun-tu rdzogs).

When these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the causal levels: those awareness-holders of the first three kinds, although they assume the births of humans, gods, and Brahmā gods, are transformed into the ten extraordinary levels. This is said because they have obtained in their minds the essence of the ten levels, i.e., the ten transcendental perfections are totally completed.

Then, when these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the resultant levels: those (awareness-holders) of spontaneous presence are transformed into the Holder of Indestructible Reality, which is the extraordinary thirteenth level. This is said because the ten transcendental perfections which are the causal basis for the attainment of the conclusive result are totally completed.

And when these verses are explained according to their subsumption in the extraordinary irreversible levels, it is said that all those four kinds of awareness-holder are transformed into extraordinary levels because it is certain that they abide as resultant awareness-holders; and that their sequence of attainment is such that the essences of their accomplishment in those levels, i.e., the causal and resultant transcendental perfections, are totally completed, as for example a fish that has been caught by an iron hook and brought forth to dry land.

[iii. The third part (of the particular exegesis of the result attained through the feast-offerings), concerning the conclusive result (of one who has reached the goal, comments on Ch. 12.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.12]

The extraordinary levels, namely the ten and the three
Which respectively have skillful means,
Supreme skillful means and discriminative awareness.
And that which is supreme for its supreme discriminative awareness
Are spontaneously perfect through their distinctions
Of cause and result. [12]

[Tibetan]

thabs-dang shes-rab thabs-kyi mchog /
shes-rab mchog-gi mchog-gyur-pa'i /
sa-yi khyad-par bcu-dang gsum /
rgyu-'bras khyad-par lhun-gyis rdzogs / [12]

Commentary:

[iii. The third part (of the particular exegesis of the result attained through the feast-offerings), concerning the conclusive result (of one who has reached the goal, comments on Ch. 12.12):]

The eleventh level. Universal Light, is the level on which living beings are trained through emanations and enlightened activities, manifested by conclusive skillful means (thabs). It says in a sūtra:[1]

It is called the level of Universal Light because there is a diffusion of light-rays which make those to be trained into worthy recipients.

The conclusive twelfth level. Unattached Lotus-Endowed, on which supreme discriminative awareness and skillful means (-dang shes-rab thabs-kyi mchog) are effortlessly coalesced manifests in and of itself as the Buddha-field of the Spontaneous Bounteous Array.

It says in the Tantra Comprising the Supreme Path of the Means which Clearly Reveal All-Positive Pristine Cognition (NGB. Vol. 8):

On the Lotus-Endowed level.

The spontaneous pristine cognition

Of perfect rapture manifests in and of itself.

Then, there is (the thirteenth level), the field of the buddha-body of reality free from all conceptual elaborations, the original Samantabhadra, which is an enclosure of spontaneously present gemstones, supreme (mchog-gyur-pa'i) for its supreme discriminative awareness (shes-rab

mchog-gi) because it is the basis which absorbs the two (form bodies) of perfect rapture and emanation in the expanse of nirvāṇa, the ground of the Buddha-body of reality.

It says (Secret Nucleus. Ch. 9.35):[2]

The real nature which is free from
The single and the multiple.
And is without extremes or middle,
Is not seen even by the Buddhas.
The naturally present pristine cognition
Appears without abiding.

So it is that provisional and conclusive extraordinary levels (sa-yi khyad-par), namely, the ten (bcu) beginning with the Joyful, and the three (-dang gsum) beginning with Universal Light which respectively have (-pa'i) those (aforementioned) attributes are classified through their distinctions of cause and result (rgyu-'bras khyad-par); but they are naturally and spontaneously perfect (lhun-gyis rdzogs) without being sought. That is the conclusive (result) which is to be obtained.

[Synopsis of the Great All-Gathering Mandala which Supports the Feast-Offerings (435.4-439.1):]

The third subdivision (of the exegesis of this chapter—see p. 954) is a synopsis of the great all-gathering maṇḍala which supports the feast-offerings. It has three parts, namely: a teaching on the creation and perfection of Samantabhadra; the accomplishment of all maṇḍalas thereby; and (its result) which is uncovered by the slightest defect.

[i. The first of these also has two aspects, the former concerning the actual meditation. (It comments on Ch. 12.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L.

[2]:

See the above discussion. pp. 661, 672-673, on the interpretations of the eleventh and thirteenth levels as those of the nirmāṇakāya and dharmakāya respectively. in this context no real distinction is made between the thirteenth level and the sixteenth. On the phrase "enclosure of spontaneous gemstones", see above p. 858.

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One should meditate that on cushions of sun and moon.
In the expanse of the clear maṇḍala of the sky.
There is the king of pristine cognition,
In union with his consort;
Thus one comes to meditate without exception
On all maṇḍalas of the conquerors, in their entirety. [13]

[Tibetan]

mkha'-dkyil dang-pa'i dbyings nyi-zla /
ye-shes rgyal-po stangs-dpyal bsgom /
rgyal-ba'i dkyil-'khor thams-cad kun /
ma-lus-par-ni bsgom-par 'gyur / [13]

Commentary:

[i. Concerning the actual meditation:]

Preceded by the three modes of contemplation,[1] one should meditate that (bsgom) on a lotus seat with cushions of sun and moon (nyi-zla) in the expanse (dbyings) of the (-i) exceedingly clear (dang-ba) maṇḍala of the sky (mkha'-dkyil), there is the luminous celestial palace of pristine cognition, and within it the buddha-body of Samantabhadra, the king of pristine cognition (ye-shes rgyal-po) who is in union with his consort (stangs-dpyal) and is thus equipoised in the posture of indestructible reality, and from whom many rays of light emanate.

Now, according to the particular teaching of the common vehicles, buddhas are held to have different causal bases, different times, and different mannerisms. According to the uncommon vehicles, although the emanational bodies which appear as such do so in the perception of those to be trained, when investigated, they are all subsumed in the uncreated buddha-body of reality and the unimpeded buddha-body of perfect rapture which resides in Akaniṣṭha. Therefore all (Buddha-attributes) are accomplished through meditation on whichever natural Buddha-body one wishes. In particular, by meditation on the single pair of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra, who represent the nature or action of all the buddhas, one comes to meditate without exception on all the maṇḍalas of the conquerors in their entirety (rgyal-ba'i dkyil-'khor thams-cad [kun] ma-lus-par-ni bsgom-par-gyur). This is because all the maṇḍalas of deities are gathered together in the buddha-body, speech and mind, and in the naturally pure expanse.

[The latter aspect concerns the correct projection (of that meditation. It comments on Ch. 12.14):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, pp. 679. 771. 851.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.14]

From any of the four times and ten directions.

The perfect Buddha will not be found.

Mind-as-such is the perfect Buddha.

Do not search elsewhere for the Buddha. [14]

[Tibetan]

dus-bzhi phyogs-bcu gang-nas-kyang /
rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas rnyed mi-'gyur /
sems-nyid rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas-te /
sangs-rgyas gzhan-nas ma-'tshol-zhig / [14]

Commentary:

[The latter aspect concerns the correct projection (of that meditation. It comments on Ch. 12.14):]

In order to abandon hesitation caused by wondering how the deities who are the object of such meditation could be accomplished because they are (the nature of) one's own mind, or by wondering whether the nature of the deity arrives extraneously and then grants accomplishment: from any of (gang-nas kyang) the four times (dus-bzhi) such as the past and ten directions (phyogs-bcu) such as east, the perfect buddha (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas) will not be found (rnyed mi-'gyur) as an Independent characteristic apart from the mind, whether as one yet to be attained or as one which is emergent. The nature of mind (sems) as such (nyid), just as it abides, is the perfect buddha (rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas-te). Indeed the buddha will not be found by the extraneous analyses of objects and time, whether one asks if such buddhas (emerge) from other directions of space or thinks that one who has refined the seed or cause of Buddha-hood, namely the present mind itself, will at some future time become a Buddha, but is not now a Buddha.[1] Therefore, as it is taught, do not search (ma-'tshol-zhig) elsewhere (gzhan-du) for the buddha (sangs-rgyas) apart from the mind.

The Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines (T. 8) accordingly says:

A Buddha-image made a prophetic declaration in the presence of the Bodhisattva Sadapararudita, and then vanished. At that time, there occurred to Sadapararudita this following thought. "Whence ", he thought, "did this Tathāgata come, and where does he reside?". Then, Dharmodgata said, "Son of the enlightened family, this Tathāgata did not come from

anywhere and he does not reside anywhere. If you ask how this is the case, it is as follows: when, for example, the Tathāgata appears during the dreams of certain persons and then vanishes, does he come from or reside anywhere?" Sadaprarudita replied, "He does not exist. There is nothing but sleep." Dharmodgata said, "In the same way, (that Buddha-image) is not separate from the mind. So it is that all things are naturally pure."

And also:

If the mind is realised, It is the buddha. Therefore one should well cultivate the perception that does not seek elsewhere for the Buddha.

[ii. The second part (of the synopsis of the great all-gathering maṇḍala which supports the feast-offerings) concerns the accomplishment of all maṇḍalas thereby. (It comments on Ch. 12.15):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This causal system of Buddhist philosophical systems is the subject of NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 3.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.15]

One should be well united in the maṇḍala,
Samantabhadra, So that all maṇḍalas will be accomplished. [15]

[Tibetan]

dkyil-'khor kun-tu rab-sbyor-bas /
dkyil-'khor thams-cad 'grub-par gyur / [15]

Commentary:

[ii. The second part (of the synopsis of the great all-gathering maṇḍala which supports the feast-offerings) concerns the accomplishment of all maṇḍalas thereby. (It comments on Ch. 12.15):]

One should be well united in (rab-sbyor) and meditate on the creation and perfection stages of the unique maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) that is Samantabhadra (kun-tu), so that (-bas) all (thams-cad) maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) which emanate therefrom, without exception, will be accomplished ('grub-par 'gyur). Just as when the sun and moon materialised all their light-rays without exception were formed.

[iii. The third part concerns that (result) which is uncovered by the slightest defect. (It comments on Ch. 12.16):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.16]

Whether the rituals are abundant or incomplete,
Flaws are themselves pure, and there is no defect. [16]

[Tibetan]

cho-ga lhag-gam ma-tshang-na'ang /
skyon-nyid dag-ste nyes-pa-med / [16]

Commentary:

[iii. The third part concerns that (result) which is uncovered by the slightest defect. (It comments on Ch. 12.16):]

Having thus understood the point that there should be no acceptance or rejection with respect to all things because they are known to be the nature of mind, one acquires mastery over the perfection stage. Whether (na'-ang) the intricate rituals (cho-ga) of the creation stage are abundant or incomplete (lhag-gam ma-tshang), the flaws (skyon) of having degenerated in the aspects of the ritual are themselves pure and (nyid-dag-ste) there is no defect (nyes-ba-med) in one's accomplishment. That will not be obscured.[1]

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The Yogin who unites with pure reality
Is thoroughly pure in the ritual activities
Of the creation stage:
Whether (these rituals are) abundant or incomplete,
There is no defect.
The amazing great accomplishment will be achieved.

Although this is generally known in both the symbolic creation stage and the non-symbolic perfection stage,[2] the meditations which occur when the mind of the Yogin apprehends objects and symbols do not transcend the symbolic; whereas any meditations which occur when the mind is without apprehension of symbols are non-symbolic.

It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Therefore the Yogin,

Abiding in a non-symbolic disposition.
Should meditate on the yoga of symbols.
And should know there is no difference
Between the non-symbolic and the symbolic.
A Yogin of such awareness
Indeed obtains my level.
And is also called a Buddha.

And also:

As long as one apprehends the symbolic
One is a mundane being, endowed with symbols.
But when one is without objects and symbols.
One excellently transcends the mundane,
And one's perceptual range is the field of Samantabhadra.
There is no duality between
Conflicting emotions and pristine cognition.

[Summary of the Chapter (439.1-439.3):]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 12.17):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This emphasis on the direct experience of the resultant view of Buddhahood according to rdzogs-pa chen-po, transcending, or regardless of one's skill in, utpattikrama is repeated in biographical literature of the rNying-ma school. e.g.. the life of Mi-pham rNam-rgyal in NSTB. Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 709-710, where the latter is advised by mkhyen-brtse Rin-po-che of the difficulties in utpattikrama and the directness of non-conceptual meditation in khregs-chod.

[2]:

I.e. both the creation and perfection stages include paths of symbolic and non-symbolic meditation. See the respective paths of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 12.17]

—Through this meaningful expression, (the Tathāgatas) were pleased by the cloud of that display. This completes the twelfth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled the Attainment of the Feast-Offerings. [17]

[Tibetan]

—ces ched-du brjod-pas rol-mo'i sprin-gyis mnyes-bar gyur-to / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las tshogs bsgrub-pa'i le'u-ste bcu-gnyis-pa'o / [17]

Commentary:

[Summary of the Chapter (439.1-439.3):]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 12.17):]

Through (-pas) this (ces) meaningful expression (ched-du brjod) uttered in the presence of the retinue, which is pure and self-manifest, all the Tathāgatas were pleased (mnyes-bar gyur-to) by (-gyis) the offerings arrayed as the cloud (sprin) of that display (rol-mo'i) of contemplation, an excellent self-manifesting ornament which radiates without obscuration throughout the ten directions.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the twelfth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-gnyis-pa) from the (las) supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) or display of skillful means. Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) apparitional feastofferings, entitled the Attainment of the Feast-Offerings (tshogs-bsgrub-pa'i), i.e., the provisions of merit and pristine cognition according to the path.

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Then when all maṇḍalas of indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind of the Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions and four times had been subsumed together, the Great Joyous One became equipoised in the contemplation which is a cloud-like array of the nucleus of the most secret commitment, i.e. that all things are spontaneously present in the primordial Great Perfection; and then he uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

There are those of no understanding,
And those of wrong understanding,
Those with partial understanding,
And those who have not (quite) understood genuine reality,
Those of discipline, intention, secrecy,
And the naturally secret truth. [2]

These are well illustrated by verses which depend
On syllables, conventional sounds and nominal compounds. [3]

The concealed and hidden points
Extracted from within these
Abide in the mind of the teacher.
Who is the indestructible reality. [4]

Through the maṇḍala endowed with the maṇḍala,
One should meditate on the maṇḍala as a maṇḍala. [5]

The maṇḍala which emerges from the maṇḍala
Is the maṇḍala of Buddha-mind.
Supreme among maṇḍalas. [6]

The secret seminal point is the expanse
In which the maṇḍalas (emerge). [7]

The elements (abide as) the female consorts
Of the enlightened families.
Who are discriminative awareness;
The great (components) are the real nature
Of the enlightened families;
The enlightened mind is the assembly
Of indestructible reality;
The sense-organs, objects, times, and awarenesses
(Abide as) the maṇḍala of All-positive (Samantabhadra).

One should have regard for that superior Great Identity
By means of the five pristine cognitions of buddha-mind. [8]

Through the display of the pristine cognition of bliss
When the essential seminal points are united.
Offerings are made to joyous pristine cognition. [9]

Through that merit, free from corruption.
Manifests in and of itself
As a magical display of pristine cognition.
There is derived the infinite maṇḍala of the display
And the supreme (field). [10]

The secret seminal points are the expanse of real nature.
They are the actuality of all the buddhas. [11]

Manifestly perfect in the ten directions and four times.
The faces which identify body, speech, attributes.
Activities, and mind, without exception, are perceived.
This mastery is the genuine supreme nature.
For one who abides in the maṇḍala, the maṇḍala itself
Becomes spontaneously present as the maṇḍala of perfection,
And, as its ornaments, one encounters all maṇḍalas without exception.
[12]

Through the union of the perfect maṇḍala
The maṇḍalas of spirituality entirely emerge.
(One becomes) the lord who trains the maṇḍalas of space and time.
And by (deeds) which liberate the maṇḍalas of magical display.
One enacts the maṇḍala without object or subject. [13]

In the maṇḍala which is perfect in pristine cognition,
Through union with study, thought, and meditation.
The self-originated (pristine cognition).
Confronting all, is spontaneously present.
This is the supreme commitment
Not to be transgressed by all the Buddhas. [14]

One who has aspired towards this
Is deemed by all the maṇḍalas of Buddhas
To be a closest son.
Who would perform the ritual service
Of all maṇḍalas without exception
Throughout space and time, in all their aspects. [15]

This is the most secret result (gained)
By those who well abide in excellent refinement
Over aeons equal to the number of atoms in the fields.
And by those who perform the ritual service
Of all maṇḍalas without exception. [16]

In the ten directions of the six world-systems.
All maṇḍalas without exception of the conquerors

Of the past, present, and future
Have mastered this (path), and then
Spontaneously perfected the five Buddha-bodies. [17]

All (yogins) who have emerged.
And those in the future, in their entirety.
Accomplish spontaneous presence through this (path). [18]

The result, definitive and most secret.
Has been transformed into the path. [19]

For the maṇḍalas of the conquerors, without exception,
Apart from this, there is no secret definitive meaning.
Though sought, none is found by the conquerors. [20]

Among the great seals of all (Buddhas).
This supreme one should be retained by those endowed
With the eyes of discriminative awareness,
Who have well refined it in study, thought, and meditation.
And it should be given to those worthy recipients.
Who are of noble disposition and steadfast.
Who donate their bodies and enjoyments. [21]

It should never be given to others.
If it has been given to those who are deluded
Because they are agitated.
One's life will come to an untimely end.
And then one will be roasted, parched,
And one will remain so for a long time. [22]

—Such was the meaningful expression which the Tathāgata himself
uttered to the Tathāgata himself. This completes the thirteenth chapter
from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled [the
Nucleus of] Most Secret Esoteric Instructions. [23]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.1]

Then when all maṇḍalas of indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind of the Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions and four times had been subsumed together, the Great Joyous One became equipoised in the contemplation which is a cloud-like array of the nucleus of the most secret commitment, i.e. that all things are spontaneously present in the primordial Great Perfection; and then he uttered this meaningful expression. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa sku-dang gsung-dang
thugs rdo-rje'i dkyil-'khor thams-cad gcig-tu 'dus-nas dgyes-pa chen-pos /
chos thams-cad ye-nas rdzogs-pa chen-por lhun-gyis grub-pa'i dam-tshig
shin-tu gsang-ba'i snying-po sprin bkod-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par
zhugs-nas ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (439.3-483.4):]

The second part (of the teaching on the creation and perfection stages of the path—see p. 889) concerns the perfection stage which penetrates the essential meaning. It has three sections, namely: the background motivation; an exegesis of the meaning; of its words; and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 13.1):]

Once the creation stage of the path had been revealed, then (de-nas) in order to reveal the perfection stage, when all maṇḍalas of indestructible Buddha-body, speech and mind of (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje'i dkyil-'khor thams-cad) all the Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i de-bzhin gshegs-pa) had been subsumed together (gcig-tu 'dus-nas), they were displayed by the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) of unsurpassed pristine cognition, Samantabhadra the teacher in whom they abide. He became equipoised in the contemplation which, for the sake of supremely fortunate beings, is a (-i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par-zhugs) cloud-like (sprin) array (bkod-pa) of the nucleus (snying-po'i) or real nature, and which is the commitment (dam-tshig) most secret (shin-tu gsang-ba'i) to unworthy recipients, i.e., the commitment that all things (chos thams-cad) of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are spontaneously present in the primordial Great Perfection (ye-nas rdzogs-pa chen-por lhun-gyis grub-pa'i). And then he uttered this meaningful expression (nas ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do) concerning the genuine esoteric instructions.

[Exegesis of the Meaning of the Words (440.1-483.1)]

The second part includes both a general teaching on how the secret truth abides in the mind of the master of indestructible reality (vajrācārya), and a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection.

[General Teaching on how the Secret Truth Abides in the Mind of the Master of Indestructible Reality (440.1-448.3)]

[This has three subdivisions, of which (the first) concerns the recognition of that truth. (It comments on Ch. 13.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.2]

There are those of no understanding,
And those of wrong understanding,
Those with partial understanding,
And those who have not (quite) understood genuine reality,
Those of discipline, intention, secrecy,
And the naturally secret truth. [2]

[Tibetan]

ma-rtogs-pa-dang log-par rtogs /
phyogs-rtogs yang-dag-nyid ma-rtogs /
'dul-ba dgongs-pa gsang-ba-dang /
rang-bzhin gsang-ba'i don-rnams-ni / [2]

Commentary:

[Exegesis of the Meaning of the Words (440.1-483.1)]

The second part includes both a general teaching on how the secret truth abides in the mind of the master of indestructible reality (vajrācārya), and a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection.

[General Teaching on how the Secret Truth Abides in the Mind of the Master of Indestructible Reality (440.1-448.3)]

[This has three subdivisions, of which (the first) concerns the recognition of that truth. (It comments on Ch. 13.2):]

In general one should depend on the individual masters who reveal the conclusive goals of the different vehicles; and in particular one should meet a Guru, pleasing him with one's desire for the oral instructions because the hidden and concealed points contained within the text or verses of the tantras and literary transmissions belonging to the conclusive truth of the natural Great Perfection abide in the mind of the Guru.[1]

Now, the inconceivable. Indescribable Buddha-fields and the domains of sentient beings are not definite because they cannot be enumerated. However, in this Auspicious Aeon and in this world-system of Patient Endurance, the lamp of the Buddhas has been arrayed.[2] When the modes of their vehicles —lesser, supreme, and erroneous —and their textual traditions are provisionally subsumed, they fall into eight categories. There are firstly those of no understanding (ma-rtogs-pa) of the genuine truth: These are ordinary beings who do not entertain the philosophical systems, i.e. those who follow the basic vehicles of Gods and humans through which progress towards happiness is attained because they strive after a (goal) of simple excellence. Their purpose is to be propelled into (birth) among the gods and humans of the desire realm through the practice of the

ten virtues, and to attain the higher realms of formless concentration.

There is a passage in the Madhyamaka teachings, which begins:[3]

The correct view for a mundane being...

There are some who hold (those of no understanding) to include both the apathetic and the materialists but that would be an improper temporal sequence of (progression), which does not apply in the classification of the vehicles. Indeed, in the previous section on the five vehicles, those of no understanding have been described as belonging to the vehicle of gods and humans. This is called the basic vehicle because it subsumes all those who hanker for the vehicles. The apathetic and the materialists are unconnected with it however because they are categories of the philosophical extremists who have erroneous understanding.[4]

Then, there are those of wrong understanding (-dang log-par rtogs), divorced from the genuine truth, who contrive the extremist philosophies. Although these have inconceivable categories, calculated according to the enumeration of their wrong views, when subsumed they are known as the five schools of philosophical extremists (Tīrthikas). These comprise four schools which adopt an eternalist view and one which adopts a nihilist view.

The four eternalist schools are the Nyayāyika (rig-pa-can) which holds Īśvara to be eternal, the Vaiṣṇava which holds Viṣṇu to be eternal, the Sāṃkhya which holds the soul (puruṣa) to be eternal, and the Vaiśeṣika which holds atomic particles to be eternal. These are the followers of the sage Kapila, Kaṇāda, Akṣapāda, and Ulūka. Those who hold a nihilist view are the hedonists, or else they are called Digambaras, or Bārhaspatyas. All of them uphold egotism.[5]

The eternalistic views uphold the Independent existence of the self or soul (puruṣa) alone, asserting that its nature empowers and pervades the elements, while abiding in the hearts of all sentient beings. They also hold that there are eternal deities—Īśvara, Viṣṇu, and so forth—who cast one into exalted realms or Into evil existences. The nihilists however hold that the self comes Into being having emerged suddenly within the mother's womb, and that at the time of death, the continuity of the self is interrupted. Thus they are nihilistic with respect both to the past and the future. Because they hold that there are no past or future lives, and that there is neither liberation nor omniscience, they are called nihilistic extremists or materialists. When these are subsumed together they are gathered into the two categories of the eternalists and the nihilists.

Then, there are those with partial understanding (phyogs-rtogs) of the genuine reality, who comprise both the pious attendants and the self-centred Buddhas. This is because they respectively understand one part and one and a half parts of what is implied by selflessness, and because they are liberated from saṃsāra.[6]

The pious attendants, when classified, comprise four basic sects (of the Vinaya), which are then subdivided Into eighteen.[7] Among them, the

Mūlasarvāstivāda sect had seven subdivisions, namely, the Kāśyapīya, Mahīśāsaka, Dharmagupta, Bahuśrutiya, Tāmrasatiya, Vibhāgyavādin, and the basic subdivision or Sarvāstivādin. These are the lineages derived from the students of Rāhulabhadra, who was the son of the Transcendent Lord (Śākyamuni), and who belonged to the class of Kṣatriyas. They spoke in Sanskrit, and their robes had between twenty-five and twenty-nine fringes, with the edge-symbol of the the night-lotus (utpala), the day-lotus (padma), and the gemstone (ratna).[8]

The Mahāsaṃghika sect had five subdivisions, namely, the Pūrvaśaila, Haimavata, Prajñāptivādin, Lokottaravādin, and the basic subdivision (Uttaraśaila). These were the lineages derived from the students of the elder Mahākāśyapa who belonged to the class of Brahmins. They spoke in the Prakrit language and their robes had between twenty-three and twenty-nine fringes with the edge-symbols of the svāstika and the glorious heart-orb (śrīvatsa).[9]

The Sthavira sect had three subdivisions, namely, the Jetavanīya, Abhayagirivādin, and Mahāvihāravādin. These are the lineages derived from the students of the sublime renunciate Mahākatyāyana, who belonged to the bamboo-craftsman caste (of Vaiśyas). They spoke in the Apabhraṃśa language, and their robes had between twenty-one and twenty-nine fringes with the edge-symbol of the conch shell.[10]

The Sammitiya sect had three subdivisions, namely, the Kaurukullika, Āvantaka, and Vatsīputriya. These were the lineages derived from the students of the sublime renunciate Upāli, who belonged to the barber-caste (of Sūdras). They spoke in the Paiśācika language and their robes had the same number of fringes as those of the Sthaviras.[11]

All these (pious attendants) actualise their result by realising that the selfhood of the Individual comprises an ego and components which are apprehend as an ego, and that, apart from them, it does not exist.[12]

The self-centred Buddhas, when classified, are of three types, namely, those who are great in provisions and conduct, those who are small (in provisions and conduct), and those who resemble a rhinoceros (in their solitary approach). Their view encompasses one and a half (parts of what is implied by selflessness) because they understand the selflessness of the Individual and they realise that external objects are without independent existence.[13] To accomplish enlightenment for themselves in their final birth, without actually referring to a guru, they realise that the reality of dependent origination arises of its own accord, and then they are liberated. They teach a symbolic doctrine, which is not divulged through speech.[14]

Furthermore, there are those who have not quite understood (ma-rtogs) the genuine reality (yang-dag-nyid) or truth of the abiding nature absolutely or without a residue (of misunderstanding). These are the adherents of the causal vehicles of dialectics, who hold that sentient beings, by acquiring the two provisions, which are the causal basis, accomplish their desired result of Buddha-hood over many countless aeons. When classified, they comprise both the adherents of the Madhyamaka and of the Mind Only schools.[15]

Among the latter there are some who hold that the phenomena of the external containing world are the mind. This mind then may have both veridical and false status because it is held to be either veridical or false in relation to the ultimate pristine cognition or Intrinsic awareness, where there is no subject-object dichotomy.[16]

It says in the Ascetic Discipline of Avalokiteśvara according to the Madhyamaka (dbu-ma spyan-ras-gzigs-kyi brtul-zhugs):

Having admitted that the objects which diversely appear are one's own mind, one should refute the natural dichotomy through which that mind also propounds as true or false the pristine cognition of particularising intrinsic awareness, where there is ultimately no duality of subject and object.

There are also two schools of Madhyamaka, among which the Svātantrikas (who apply independent reasoning) hold that these diverse appearances are relative, in the manner of a magical display, and that ultimately they are of a sky-like non-existing nature. The adherents of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka hold that at all times these (appearances) are without independent existence. They may appear corresponding to the eight similes of apparition, but they are non-existent in any respect and beyond the stains of the four extremes because they are free from all extremes of conceptual elaboration.[17] Having determined all things according to the view or reality which is empty of the two kinds of selfhood, the result is held to be achieved after one has forsaken the non-virtuous path and attained the virtuous one.

When (these schools) are appraised from the perspective of the higher vehicles, although they hold that all phenomena are realised to be without self and to be the same in nature, they do not perceive that all things are identical in primordial Buddha-hood. Nor do they realise that this nature requires neither renunciation nor acceptance because conflicting deeds themselves arise as pristine cognition. Furthermore, (the adherents of the causal vehicles) are meagre in their skillful means, and they accomplish their result with difficulty and toil over a long period of time. For all these reasons, they are said not to understand the genuine reality.[18]

There are some who confuse these opinions, saying that there is no distinction of discriminative awareness, but that (the resultant vehicles) are superior in skillful means. However, the discriminative awareness established through skillful means by one who has adopted the superior skillful means (of the resultant vehicles) and is consequently more sublime is also superior to (the discriminative awareness of the causal vehicles). [19] In addition, where in the vehicle of the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness is it held that all things abide in the maṇḍala, or that this very mind of the present moment attains Buddha-hood without changing so much as a hair? Therefore, (the resultant vehicles) are superior in both skillful means and discriminative awareness.

It says in the Lamp of the Three Modes (T. 3707):[20]

Though they are identical in purpose.
The vehicle of the mantras is superior;
For it is unobscured and endowed with many means.
It is without difficulty
And is referred to by those of highest acumen.

So it is explained that in the way of transcendental perfection there is an aspect of deluded obscuration.

Moreover, it also says in the Definitive Order of the Three Vehicles (t. 3812):[21]

The vehicle pure in its visualisation,
Its power of assistance, and level of conduct,
To those who are endowed with intelligence
Is well known to be the greatest.

And in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

The most marvellous and great way of secret mantras
Is the shortest among the paths.
It is the most unerring and genuine of skillful means.
And in terms of discriminative awareness.
It is the extraordinary discriminative awareness.

In addition, there are those who perform acts of discipline ('dul-ba) with regard to the misconduct of body, speech and mind, and who emphasise cleanliness and austerities, namely, the adherents of the Kriyātantras and the Caryātantras.

When (these Tantras) are classified, there are three categories, i.e., those in which the deity is attained dependent simply upon the cultivation of enlightened mind, those in which the deity is attained dependent simply on austerities and purificatory fasting, and those in which the deity is attained dependent simply on the permissive blessing which confers awareness.[22] These rites of attainment are also commenced and concluded with reference to the auspicious planets, stars and temporal conjunctions.[23]

There are also those of Intention (dgongs-na) who adhere to the Yogatantras. The Tibetan term dgongs-pa, derived from the Sanskrit abhiprāya, means the "intention of mind". The deity is attained chiefly through the contemplation of the one-pointed mind.[24] There is, by the way, no tradition in which the deity may be attained without having received empowerment.

There are those which clearly reveal the secrecy (gsang-ba-dang) of the Buddha-body, speech, and mind, namely the Mahāyogatantras. These are secret because they should not be revealed in the lower vehicles where beings have an intelligence which actually clings to objects. When classified, they comprise the Father Tantras which chiefly reveal the creation stage, the Mother Tantras which chiefly reveal the perfection stage, and the Non-dual Tantras which chiefly reveal the coalescence (of

the two stages).[25]

And then there is the marvelous naturally secret truth (rang-bzhin gsang-ba'i don) which is primordial and spontaneously present. This is the great Magical Net, where mind and pristine cognition are revealed to be self-manifest in accordance with the Great Perfection. It is secret because it is superior in its essence, natural expression, and skillful means, which are not within the perceptual range of all beings. When classified, it consists of the Great Perfection of the coalescence of creation and perfection stages, which reveals mind and pristine cognition to be without duality; the Great Perfection of the primordial liberation according to the Mental and Spatial (Classes) which chiefly reveal the mind; and the Great Perfection of the reality of inner radiance, which chiefly reveals pristine cognition.[26] So it is that the different vehicles comprise the truth which is to be understood.

[The second subdivision (of the general teaching—see p. 988) reveals the expanse in which this truth is present. (It comments on Ch. 13.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the terms "hidden" (gab) and "concealed" (sbas) with reference to the meaning of the tantra-texts, see above, pp. 321-322, and below, p. 998.

[2]:

On this teaching by the *nirmāṇakāya*, see above. Ch. 3: and on the *sahalokadhātu* and the *bhadrakalpa* in particular, see R. Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology*; NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 52. Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 10-12, notes.

[3]:

Udānavarga. Ch. 4. v. 9.

[4]:

On these categories of non-Buddhist philosophy and views, see also above. Ch. 3. PP. 505-506, 521-522; and for a slightly different classification, which places the "apathetic" (*phyal-ba*) and "materialists" (*rgyang-'phen-pa*) among "those of no understanding" (*ma-rtogs-pa*), see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 12ab.

[5]:

On these philosophical schools. see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 12b-16a. Note that here the distinction between the *Digambara* Jains and the *Bārhaspatya* nihilists is not made. *Kaṇāda* and *Ulūka* are alternative names for the founder of *Vaiśeṣika* atomism.

[6]:

Śrāvakas are said to realise the selflessness of the individual (pudgalanairātmya) and Pratyekabuddhas are also said to realise the selflessness of the external phenomena composing the outer world (dharmanairātmya). They are not however considered to have realised the selflessness of the inner phenomena of consciousness. in addition to the following account, see also above. Ch. 3. pp. 506-509. 520; and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. PP. 68b-71a. 121b-127a.

[7]:

See Blue Annals, pp. 27-33. and NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 1. p. AA, where the account is based on Bu-ston, History of Buddhism. Pt. 2, p. 98.

[8]:

Cf. F. Lessing and A. Wayman, Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras, p. 69.

[9]:

Note that mKhas-grub-rje's description is at variance with this one in that the language is said to be Apabhraṃśa, the number of fringes to be 23-27, and the edge-symbol to be the śaṅkha.

[10]:

F. Lessing and A. Wayman, op. cit., p. 69. differ in holding the Sthaviras to speak in Prakrit, their robes to have 2125 fringes, and their edge-symbol to be the cakra.

[11]:

F. Lessing and A. Wayman,, p. 69. add that their edge-symbol was the Sorsika flower.

[12]:

Cf. above, note 6.

[13]:

Cf. above, note 6.

[14]:

On the silence of the Pratyekabuddhas, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, p. 126.

[15]:

Cf. above. Ch. 3. pp. 509-513; also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. pp. 71aff.

[16]:

On these divisions of Cittamātra, known as Sākāravādin and Nirākāravādin. see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. pp. 78a-72b.

[17]:

For the rNying-ma view of the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika schools of Madhyamaka, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 72b-77a.

[18]:

On these and other distinctions between the causal and resultant aspects of the Mahāyāna, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 131b-143a.

[19]:

This distinction is also discussed generally in NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 4, pp. 131b-143a.

[20]:

For an exegesis of this verse, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 133-134.

[21]:

As quoted in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4.

[22]:

Tibetan sems-bskyed, dka'-thub-dang smyung-gnas, and rig-gtad rjes-gnang.

[23]:

"temporal conjunctions" (dus-tshigs).

[24]:

On the term abhiprāya, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. pp. 118a-121a.

[25]:

On Mahāyoga, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 156a-162b. The category of Mother Tantras (ma-rgyud) is also included in Mahāyoga. and indeed in the Guhyagarbhatantra, as is illustrated by the following Incident from the life of Zur-chung Shes-rab Grags (NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 339-359):—On one occasion Zurcungpa had to leave his hermitage to attend to the problems of three "useless men" could not uphold the teaching. One of these was 'Go-bya-tsha who went to 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas, a noted critic of the Zurs and of the Guhyagarbhatantra, saying that he needed the Mother-tantras as the background for the path of skillful means. He has failed to realise the because the paths of skillful means and of liberation are both contained in the Guhyagarbha, it fulfills the definition of a Mother-Tantra.

[26]:

As previously stated, kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa classifies the Guhyagarbhatantra in accordance with the classes of rdzogs-pa chen-po. On the second of these, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 190b-198a, and on the others, *ibid.*, 198a-211b; also see below, pp. 999-1044.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.3]

These are well illustrated by verses which depend
On syllables, conventional sounds and nominal compounds. [3]

[Tibetan]

yi-ge sgra-btags ming-tshogs-las /
brten-pa'i tshig-gis rab-mtshon-te / [3]

Commentary:

[The second subdivision (of the general teaching—see p. 988) reveals the expanse in which this truth is present. (It comments on Ch. 13.3):]

The meanings assumed by these vehicles are preserved in the texts which form their verbal expression, and the texts are also comprised of minute syllables (yi-ge). The latter take shape as nouns which comprise conventional (btags) vocalic and consonantal sounds (sgra), such as the noun a-ma (=mother) which combines the vowel a and the consonant ma. Then ślokas are well composed, the corpus of the different treatises or tantras is given form, and the respective meanings which are to be expressed through the different texts are well illustrated (rab-tu mtshon-te) by verses which depend on (-la-brten-pa'i tshig-gis) sentences formed of all the many nominal (ming) compounds (tshogs).

[iii. The third subdivision (of the general teaching) concerns the one who reveals this truth without error. (It comments on Ch. 13.4):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.4]

The concealed and hidden points
Extracted from within these
Abide in the mind of the teacher.
Who is the indestructible reality. [4]

[Tibetan]

khong-nas gab-sbas don 'byin-pa /
ston-pa rdo-rje'i thugs-la gnas / [4]

Commentary:

[iii. The third subdivision (of the general teaching) concerns the one who reveals this truth without error. (It comments on Ch. 13.4):]

Distinctive modes of truth abide within these (khong) different texts and their verses. In particular, there are concealed (gab) truths contained within the different verses of this natural Tantra of the Secret Nucleus which are naturally hard to understand, including the view that all things are primordial Buddha-hood; and there are those which are hidden (sbas) by means of symbolic language and so forth because the profound secrets, which it is improper to proclaim within range of ordinary beings, are not to be comprehended by those who lack good fortune.

These are naturally exemplified by the following verse, (Ch. 12.7):[1]

By the seal of the "vowels" and "consonants"...

Such points (don), manifestly extracted from ('byin-pa) the texts, abide in the mind of (-i thugs-la gnas) the teacher (ston-pa) who is the master of indestructible reality (rdo-rje), and in whom the meaning of the tantra is incontrovertible. Thus, the teacher resembles an only child.

There are some who say that these (profundities) are extracted in Akaniṣṭha by the Teacher Samantabhadra, and extracted in ordinary realms by the masters of indestructible reality. Although this seems in order, there is in fact no connection. The one who extracts the meaning from within this tantra is shown to be different from the teacher of the tantra, so how could Samantabhadra be the expositor and audience, and (at the same time) extract the meaning? That is indeed a misunderstanding.[2]

[Detailed Exegesis of the Meaning of the Natural Great Perfection (448.3-483.1)]

The latter section of the (exegesis—see p. 988) is a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection. It has three subdivisions, namely: a teaching on the actual profound meaning of the nucleus; its superiority over other (teachings); and a teaching on the worthy recipients to whom it should be given.

[The Actual Profound Meaning of the Nucleus (448.3-477.6)]

This also has three parts, namely, a brief teaching, an extensive exegesis, and a synopsis.

[The first (448.4-449.6) is also threefold, and its first section concerns the creation stage of skillful means. (It comments on Ch. 13.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the sbyor-sgrol practices symbolised by the coded terms ā-li kā-li, see Ch. 11, pp. 896-922.

[2]:

While identifying the teacher of the tantra and its compiler (cf. p. 67), a distinction is drawn between its teacher (Samantabhadra) and the vajrācārya who extracts meaning from the tantra.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.5]

Through the maṇḍala endowed with the maṇḍala,
One should meditate on the maṇḍala as a maṇḍala. [5]

[Tibetan]

dkyil-'khor ldan-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyis /
dkyil-'khor-la-ni dkyil-'khor bsgom / [5]

Commentary:

[Detailed Exegesis of the Meaning of the Natural Great Perfection (448.3-483.1)]

The latter section of the (exegesis—see p. 988) is a detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection. It has three subdivisions, namely: a teaching on the actual profound meaning of the nucleus; its superiority over other (teachings); and a teaching on the worthy recipients to whom it should be given.

[The Actual Profound Meaning of the Nucleus (448.3-477.6)]

This also has three parts, namely, a brief teaching, an extensive exegesis, and a synopsis.

[The first (448.4-449.6) is also threefold, and its first section concerns

the creation stage of skillful means. (It comments on Ch. 13.5):]

All things of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa subsumed in the components, sensory bases and activity fields attain Buddha-hood primordially in the maṇḍalas of buddha-body, speech, and mind; and they are naturally pure. Apart from that, they do not subsequently attain Buddha-hood through the path, having previously not attained Buddha-hood. Abiding primordially in that way, all living beings partake of the nature which is effortlessly endowed with (ldan-pa'i) the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of the spontaneous ground. When one has realised it as such, through the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-gyis) of contemplation, one should visualise and meditate (bsgom) on the (la-ni) primordially present maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor), as a maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) which is known to be present.

Therefore, although the nature of all things is such, there is no advantage in it merely being so. For it is the ground in which they are present as such, and this is yet to be attained through the path, just as gold and silver are present in gold and silver ore, but Invisible if they are not smelted and refined; and just as a white conch-shell may be present, but appear yellow to one with phlegmatic eye-disease until (the disease) has been treated, so that it is essential to treat the phlegmatic disease.[1]

[The second, concerning the perfection stage of discriminative awareness, (comments on Ch. 13.6):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This analogy whereby the purification of obscurations is compared to a phlegmatic eye disease is frequently utilised in the exegeses of the causal vehicles, particularly in the case of Great Madhyamaka (dbu-ma chen-po). See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, PP. 77a-116b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.6]

The maṇḍala which emerges from the maṇḍala
Is the maṇḍala of Buddha-mind.
Supreme among maṇḍalas. [6]

[Tibetan]

dkyil-'khor dkyil-'khor-las byung-ba /
thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor dkyil-'khor mchog / [6]

Commentary:

[The second, concerning the perfection stage of discriminative awareness, (comments on Ch. 13.6):]

The maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of bliss, radiance, and non-conceptualisation is that which emerges from the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-las byung-ba) where the appearance of accumulated ideas and conflicting emotions is retained by skillful means. Because it is naturally pure right where it is, without being renounced, it is called the maṇḍala of buddha-mind (thugs-kyi dkyil-'khor) supreme among (mchog) all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor).[1]

[iii. The third, concerning the stage of inner radiance where these are without duality, (comments on Ch. 13.7):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Bliss (bde-ba), radiance (gsal-ba) and non-conceptualisation (mi-rtog-pa).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.7]

The secret seminal point is the expanse
In which the maṇḍalas (emerge). [7]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i thig-le dkyil-'khor dbyings / [7]

Commentary:

[iii. The third, concerning the stage of inner radiance where these are without duality, (comments on Ch. 13.7):]

Within the doctrinal wheel of the heart-centre and so forth, there is the amazing secret seminal point (gsang-ba'i thig-le) which abides as the primordial and spontaneous nature of Buddha-body and pristine cognition. When it is experientially cultivated through the conditions or esoteric instructions of the guru, it is the expanse in which (dbyings) all the maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the inexhaustible wheels of adornment, the buddha-body, speech, and mind, emerge.

This aspect appears to have been misunderstood by the ordinary scholars of the Magical Net of the past because in this tantra it is extremely hidden and concealed.[1]

[Secondly, there is the extensive exegesis (449.6-477.3), which is also threefold: the outer creation stage, the inner perfection stage, and the secret stage of inner radiance.]

[Outer Creation Stage (450.1-453.1) (comments on Ch. 13.8):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This particular verse is seen as the basis for kLong-chen Rab'-byams-pa'd great exegesis in phyogs-bcu mun-sel on the thod-real practices of the rdzogs-pa chen-po, pp. 1022-1044. Cf. its more exoteric treatment in Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan, p. 331, which is representative of the bka'-ma tradition.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.8]

The elements (abide as) the female consorts
Of the enlightened families.
Who are discriminative awareness;
The great (components) are the real nature
Of the enlightened families;
The enlightened mind is the assembly
Of indestructible reality;
The sense-organs, objects, times, and awarenesses
(Abide as) the maṇḍala of All-positive (Samantabhadra).
One should have regard for that superior Great Identity
By means of the five pristine cognitions of Buddha-mind. [8]

[Tibetan]

'byung-ba shes-rab rigs-kyi yum /
chen-po rigs-kyi de-bzhin-te /
byang-chub sems-ni rdo-rje'i tshogs /
dbang-po yul dus rig-pa rnam /
kun-tu bzang-po'i dkyil-'khor-la /
bdag-nyid chen-po lhag-pa-yi /
thugs-kyi ye-shes lngas blta-zhing / [8]

Commentary:

[Secondly, there is the extensive exegesis (449.6-477.3), which is also threefold: the outer creation stage, the inner perfection stage, and the secret stage of inner radiance.]

[Outer Creation Stage (450.1-453.1) (comments on Ch. 13.8):]

Concerning the determination (of the creation stage) by the view: The images which appear as the five external elements ('byung-ba) abide as the female consorts (yum) or display of (-kyi) reality—the original enlightened families (rigs) without inherent existence. These are the reality, apparent but not existent, the naturally pure abiding nature, Prajñāpāramitā or the Mother Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (shes-rab), who gives visible form to emptiness.[1] This means that the appearances of reality abide indivisibly in the emptiness of reality.

It says accordingly in the Supreme Tantra of Clear Expression (T. 369):

Through the nature of diverse phenomena,
Emptiness is expressed as form.

And in the Heart Sūtra of Discriminative Awareness (T. 21):

Emptiness is form.

The five components, indicated by the term great (chen-po) elements, are the real nature (de-bzhin-nyid) of the five male consorts of the enlightened families (rigs-kyi), who are natural expressions of the emptiness of form, similar to a reflected image on a mirror. Moreover, the actual elements are said to be naturally subsumed within the inner components as solidity, liquidity, warmth, lightness and mobility, and space, while the corresponding external components comprise their so-called transformations or elemental forms.[2] The Inner aspects outwardly appear in the manner of an Image and a reflection on a mirror. Thus, the apparent reality of the five components is empty of inherent existence, and is therefore a reality which appears without having independent existence.

As (the same text) continues:

Form is emptiness.

And as is said in the Madhyamaka:[3]

Whatever the nature of form may be,
It is a description of emptiness.

The awareness or enlightened mind (byang-chub sems-ni) is a nature without ground or basis, and it primordially does not conceive of conceptual objects, i.e., It is the assembly (tshogs) of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra, who are the nature of indestructible reality (rdo-rje'i). This indescribable expanse of awareness where radiance and emptiness are without duality is called the assembly of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra because it is the source of all the innumerable pristine cognitions.

The sense-organs (dbang-po) such as the eyes, the sense-objects (yul) such as form, the times (dus) including the past, and the awarenesses (rig-

pa-rnams) including the consciousness of the eyes are pure respectively as the male spiritual warriors, the female spiritual warriors, and the gatekeepers; and they primordially abide as the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of reality, which is that of (-'i) (Samantabhadra), without proof or clarification. This means that their nature is Indeed positive (bzang-po) because they appear but are in all (kun-tu) respects without Inherent existence, and that the essence of their diverse phenomena is of a single savour in emptiness. To understand phenomena in this manner is the (genuine) view.[4]

As is said in the Madhyamaka:[5]

A single thing has the essential nature of all things.
Whoever sees the real nature of one single thing
Perceives the real nature of all things.

And in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

If one thing is known, one is said to be knowledgeable with respect to all forms; for these are forms of quiescent reality.

Secondly, concerning the experiential cultivation (of this view) through meditation:

Once it is known that all things of phenomenal existence are from this very moment present in the maṇḍala of Samantabhadra, without Inherent existence, one should meditate on that (-la) disposition. Beginners of little intellectual ability should enter into a non-referential meditative equipoise through the sequence of meditation in which the creation stage is clear. On the other hand, those who have either experienced the space (of reality) or possess supreme intelligence should regard the nature of any appearances and thoughts that arise as primordial emptiness and without basis; or else they should become equipoised In the disposition of that creation stage, (in which appearances) are without independent existence but like a reflected Image. At that time, the essential nature is present, free from intellectual and conceptual elaborations, without the subjective apprehension of objects or signs. This is the superior (lhag-pa-yi) profound Intention of the male and female consorts Samantabhadra, the Great Identity (bdag-nyid chen-po). One should have regard for (lta-zhing) and completely assume the disposition of that reality by means of the five pristine cognitions of buddha-mind (ye-shes lngas), beginning with the mirror-like one.

Now, the mirror-like pristine cognition refers to the unimpeded appearance of the forms of external objects. The pristine cognition of reality's expanse refers to the emptiness which is their essence. The pristine cognition of sameness refers to the absence of grasping in that respect. The pristine cognition of discernment refers to the particular appearances of form, sound and so forth: and the pristine cognition of accomplishment refers to liberation from the conflicting emotions of refutation, proof, and so forth. These five pristine cognitions thus refer to the five poisons, which through mere recognition at the time of their arising, are Inherently pure without being renounced.[6]

Moreover, when the mind enters into meditative equipoise in a one-pointed manner, the pristine cognition of reality's expanse refers to the essence or emptiness. The mirror-like pristine cognition is the unimpeded radiance and clarity of awareness. The pristine cognition of sameness is the absence of dualistic apprehension. The pristine cognition of discernment is the unimpeded appearance of objects: and the pristine cognition of accomplishment is liberation from the subject-object dichotomy.

At this juncture, it is revealed that one should enter into meditative equipoise in the disposition of that reality which accords with the creation stage, but it is not the creation stage itself which is being described. There are therefore some who have been mistaken and have not seen so much as a part of these attributes which are present within the maṇḍala of the deities according to this creation stage.[7]

[Inner Perfection Stage (453.1-463.4):]

The second is the inner perfection stage, which includes an overview and an interlinear commentary. The former (453.2-462.5) comprises both the path of skillful means (thabs-lam) and the path of liberation (grol-lam).

As to the former, it says in the Oceanic Magical Net (ngb. vol. 15):[8]

There are the upper and lower doors (of the body)
Which, transformed through particular vital energies,
Bring forth pristine cognition.
These are the very skillful means
Which both eject and draw in (vital energy):
The "cow of space" is milked
By the motion of the vital energy of fire
In the three "life-giving trees" with their three centres,
And this is known as the aspect (of skillful means)
Associated with the upper (door).
By developing the five-fold sequence of "enlightened mind"
Which, in three steps, is drawn in,
The nature in which the sixteen levels are obtained
Becomes co-emergent, so that the path of release
Is effected through control (of the seminal fluid).

Accordingly, (the path of skillful means) has three parts—the training in the vital energy associated with the upper door (of the body), the training in the seminal point or fluid associated with the lower door, and the skillful means of meditation on the Caṇḍālī, which assists these.[9]

The first also has two sections, of which the former concerns the nature (of the vital energy associated with the upper door) which is to be known: Within the body of indestructible reality there are three main energy channels, namely the white Rasanā on the right, the red Lalanā on the left, and the dark-blue Avadhūti in the centre. The three media (of body, speech, and mind) and the three poisons are supported by those three "life-giving trees"; and the three Buddha-bodies are supported by them through the purification of skillful means and discriminative awareness in coalescence. The three centres from which those (channels) diverge are the

centre of supreme bliss (mahāsukhacakra) in the crown, the centre of perfect rapture (sambhogacakra) in the throat, and the centre of the doctrine (dharmacakra) in the heart. This refers to the meditation on the seed of pristine cognition and the meditation of vital energy. When, in addition to that, one meditates on the Caṇḍālī (the channels) diverge at four (centres) including the centre of emanation (nirmāṇacakra) in the navel. The petals (of those four centres) respectively number thirty-two, sixteen, eight, and sixty-four.

On further analysis, these diverge into seventy-two thousand channels of pristine cognition, as is said in the Hevajra Tantra (T. 417-8):[10]

The energy channels are correctly explained
To number seventy-two thousand.

Within these energy channels, for twenty-four hours, day and night, the vital energies of pristine cognition move covertly, corresponding to them in number; but because that motion is unclear, its extraordinary enlightened attributes are not manifested. When, however, vital energy is controlled, the vital energy of conflicting emotions turns into and moves as the vital energy of pristine cognition so that enlightened attributes arise within the Yogin.

In general, there are twenty-one thousand six hundred coarse vital energies which move by day and night. These, inasmuch as they move coarsely, are the vital energies of deeds or conflicting emotions. But when they are controlled, the radiant, non-conceptual pristine cognition is generated, and so they become the vital energies of pristine cognition.

Now (vital energy) is of three types—the upward moving vital energy of speech (upadāna), the downward moving vital energy of excretion (apadāna), and the balanced vital energy of digestion (samastha), which are so called because they respectively move upwards, downwards, and in between, within the body, and because they respectively move outwards, penetrate inwards, and balance those two. Moreover, those vital energies are called the male vital energy when they move through the right nostril, the female vital energy when they move through the left nostril, and the neuter vital energy when they move (through both) equally.

As for the five colours of the vital energies: The vital energy of earth is yellow, the vital energy of water is white, the vital energy of fire is red, the vital energy of air is green, and the vital energy of space, which is great pristine cognition, is blue.

At the time when these vital energies (of the elements) are supported in the four directions and centre of the heart-centre, and penetrate into the central channel, they are transformed into the vital energy of pristine cognition, in such a way that the glow of the five energies arises as smoke, mirage and the diverse an apparitional forms of emptiness.

The latter section concerns the experiential cultivation (of this vital energy associated with the upper door) once it has been known. It has three aspects of which the first concerns the practical steps: Having

Induced the two ends of the Rasanā and the Lalanā from the space between the eyebrows into the right and left nostrils respectively, the vital energy is then slowly expelled, so that obscurations are cleansed, and all appearances are visualised as the maṇḍala of pristine cognition. Through inhalation, the vital energy of pristine cognition is absorbed therefrom, and proceeds downwards, entering the central channel from the (secret centre) covered with pubic hair (sbu-na-gu'i mtshams), where the (lower) ends of those two (channels) meet. Thereby one meditates and momentarily apprehends that the four centres and their petals are filled with pristine cognition.

When one has become somewhat stable in this practice, there follows (the second aspect of experiential cultivation) namely, the meditation according to the actual esoteric instructions, which is to be gradually refined and experienced, and then applied in an Immediate manner. It has four parts, namely: the esoteric instructions of Samantabhadra which entail meditation on the heart-centre; the esoteric instructions of Samantabhadri which entail meditation on the navel-centre; the esoteric instructions of their pure union which entail meditation on the throat-centre; and the esoteric Instructions of their great enveloping pervasion which entail meditation on the crown centre.

As to the first of these: The mind is refined into the causal basis of the five male consorts, an essence of five seminal points, the size of mustard seeds, which gather together the five pure-essences within the precious casket of the doctrinal centre (dharmacakra) in the heart. Then, the mind is consequently refined into five globes of light, and, consequent on that, into the buddha-bodies of the five enlightened families. One should know that the procedure is similar for (the meditations on) the navel, throat, and crown centres.[11]

Through this meditation, (there follows the third aspect of the experiential cultivation, the result): One will provisionally accomplish supernormal cognitive powers, contemplation, and miraculous abilities et cetera; and one will obtain the conclusive supreme Buddha-level.

The second part (of the path of skillful means) is the training of the seminal fluid or point associated with the lower door (of the female partner's body).[12] It has two sections of which the former concerns the nature (of this practice) which is to be known:

It says in the Tantra of the Hidden Point of the Moon (T. 477):

When there is no desire, there is no enlightenment.

And in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

When there is unerring understanding of the characteristics
Of specific and general teachings on conflicting emotion.
One converts them into the path of purification.
The accomplishments of Buddha-body, speech and mind
Are nothing: but this conversion.
Grasping the energy of magical display,

One proceeds to skillful means,
And is united in discriminative awareness
Where signs do not abide.

And in the Clarifying Lamp (T. 1785):

For the sake of those persons who have desire,
Vajrasattva activated this (path).

With respect to this (training in the seminal point associated with the lower door) there is both classification and the perfection of the levels and paths through it.

The former refers to (the classification of) the four delights—delight, supreme delight, coemergent delight, and absence of delight—and to their enumeration of sixteen which is made when each of these is combined with the other three, beginning with the delight of delight.[13]

These delights also are of three types, among which (the first) concerns the four delights in relation to renunciation: Here, delight occurs when the conceptions of the male consort have been approximately renounced through the coemergent pristine cognition of meditative absorption; supreme delight occurs when they have all been renounced; absence of delight occurs when those of the female consort have been approximately renounced; and coemergent delight occurs when these have all been renounced. The second concerns the four delights in relation to presence: Here delight occurs when bliss is partially generated in the body of the male consort; supreme delight occurs when that is pervasively generated; absence of delight occurs when (bliss) is partially generated in the female consort; and coemergent delight occurs when that is pervasively generated. The third concerns the four delights in relation to their order (in the body): Here, delight occurs in the crown centre; supreme delight in the throat centre, absence of delight in the heart-centre, and co-emergent delight in the secret centre.

The latter aspect concerns the perfection of the levels and paths through these (delights).

It says in the Sequence of Indestructible Activity (P. 4720):[14]

The sixteen moments of pristine cognition
Which are present (within the body)
Are similarly classified according to the four centres.
From the paths of provision, connection, the first level and so on.
To the conclusive Buddha-level itself.
Among these, the intermediate (aspect) of the second (delight)
Corresponds to the Joyful level, and so forth.
These (delights) are explained to be perfect
Because they are Identical to the perfections
And the characteristics of the levels.

Therefore, when the momentum of the four delights is supported from above, i.e. from the crown-centre to the vajra (penis), they are classified into sixteen, which represent the perfection of the causal levels. Among them, the four delights of delight indicate the path of provisions, the delight of supreme delight indicates the path of connection, the supreme delight (of supreme delight) indicates the first level, the absence of delight (of supreme delight) Indicates the second level, and the coemergent delight (of supreme delight) Indicates the Illuminator. The delight of the absence of delight indicates the fourth level, the supreme delight of that indicates the fifth level, the absence of delight of that Indicates the sixth level, and the coemergent delight of that indicates the seventh level. Then, the delight of the coemergent delight indicates the eighth level, the supreme delight of that Indicates the ninth level, the absence of delight of that Indicates the tenth level, and the coemergent delight of that indicates the level of Universal Light.[15] At that time, the two impurities are relinquished within, and the two pure-essences (sperm) emerge, in the manner of dew, on the tip of the vajra (penis).

Similarly, by the perfection of the sixteen delights in the female consort, the two Impurities are relinquished and the two pure-essences come forth on to the tip of the lotus (vagina), whereupon the four white and red seminal points of the male and female consorts (sperm and ovum) intermingle. At that time, the male consort savours radiant bliss, and the female consort savours non-conceptual emptiness; and by the fusion of these two. there arises the intention where bliss and emptiness are coalesced and which radiates, unobscured by the two extremes. Tn this way, the level of Universal Light is the essence of the empowerment of discriminating pristine cognition.[16]

At this time, the ten transcendental perfections are also perfected: Liberality is the emission of "enlightened mind" (seminal fluid) throughout the network of energy channels; moral discipline is present because the seminal fluid is controlled without being secreted; patience is present because one is not frightened by the skillful means of the rites of sexual union; perseverance is present because one strives for the skillful means of bliss; concentration is present because the mind is one-pointed in the

disposition of that (bliss); discriminative awareness is present because the aggregates of thought arise as the maṇḍala of bliss; skillful means is present because, even after such practices, one is uncovered by conflicting emotions; power is present because conceptualising thoughts are amassed together at once; aspiration is present because one refers to the result; and the transcendental perfection of pristine cognition is 51 present because one tastes the coemergent pristine cognition.

It is also said in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

The causes and results of the transcendental perfections are perfected.

As for the genuine empowerment of supreme bliss: the seminal point in which those solar and lunar (fluids) are Intermingled, and through which bliss and emptiness are savoured in that manner is Induced upwards (through the body) by vital energy, and one becomes absorbed in the disposition of reality.[17]

Moreover, the four delights are also classified when this momentum (of the seminal fluids) is supported from below: Here they number sixteen, beginning with the coemergent delight, and they respectively indicate the levels and paths associated with the way of secret mantras. The four delights of coemergent delight indicate the path of provisions. The coemergent delight of the absence of delight indicates the path of connection; the absence of delight of that indicates the path of insight and the first level; the supreme delight of that Indicates the second level; the delight of that indicates the third level. The coemergent delight of supreme delight indicates the fourth level; the absence of delight of that Indicates the fifth level; the supreme delight of that indicates the sixth level; and the delight of that indicates the seventh level. The coemergent delight of delight indicates the eighth level; the absence of delight of that Indicates the ninth level; the supreme delight of that indicates the tenth level; and the delight of that indicates the Buddha-level.[18]

Now, the movement of the seminal point from the tip of the vajra (penis) to the navel indicates the level of Universal Light; its movement from the heart to the throat indicates the level of Unattached Lotus Endowed; its movement from the crown-centre to pervade the entire body indicates the level of the Holder of Indestructible Reality, or Great Rotating Mass (of Syllables).[19]

Although there is also a tradition which holds that the causal levels are perfected when the seminal point is ejected from the base of the penis to its tip, and the resultant levels when it is drawn inwards from the tip, in this context, the (causal and resultant levels of realisation) are respectively connected with the sequences in which the momentum (of the seminal point) is supported from above and supported from below, in accordance with the esoteric instructions of the Guru.

Similarly, the six supernormal cognitive powers, and the major and minor marks are also perfected by this practice: Introduced by skillful means, the supernormal cognitive power of recollecting: past abodes is present when the seminal point arrives in its natural abode; the

supernormal cognitive power of miraculous ability is present when the seminal point goes and comes; clairaudience is present when bliss and emptiness are without description; clairvision is present when the three buddha-levels are perceived; the scent of freedom from corruption is present because therein there is no clinging to bliss; and the supernormal cognitive power which knows the minds of others is present because the male and female consorts know the savour that is relished by one another. [20]

The thirty-two major marks are present during the coalescence of solar and lunar (fluids) which corresponds to the sixteen delights of the male and female consorts; and the eighty minor marks are present because the sixteen delights experienced through the lunar fluid or seminal point of the male consort each are endowed with the five pristine cognitions. These are absent in the female consort because she is the emptiness or reality itself.

This is the point conveyed in the following passage from the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):[21]

By transformation (of the seminal point)
Through skillful means,
Previous abodes are known;
Through miraculous ability associated
With the motion (of the seminal point)
The vital energies become radiant;
There is clairaudience, as described.
And clairvision of the three Buddha-levels;
There is non-corruption of the components,
Sensory bases and activity fields;
One knows that the twofold bliss of vowels and consonants
Intermingles and becomes one;
The sixteen (delights) by their dual movement possess the major marks.
And one series of them, endowed with five pristine cognitions,
Becomes the eighty minor marks.
Superior to the feeling of receptiveness
And other causal (teachings)
Are these seminal points.
The nature of non-dual supreme bliss.

This surpasses the tradition which holds that through the causal vehicles the supernormal cognitive powers and the major and minor marks will be obtained by virtuous actions which multiply receptiveness and so forth in an external manner.[22]

The latter section concerns the means of experiential cultivation once that (practice of the lower door) has been known: One who has the appropriate vital energy and mind should arouse a seal of action (karmamudrā) through his display of bliss. The male and female consorts are then visualised as the deities, their secret centres are consecrated as a vajra and a lotus, the seminal point descends and is retained in the vase of the vajra (penis), it is then drawn upwards, like a threaded web of syllables HUM, it is diffused throughout the entire body; and everything becomes equipoised in the disposition of the Great Perfection, the abiding

nature, without duality. The result of this (experiential cultivation) is that the supreme and common accomplishments are swiftly obtained.

As this text says (Ch. 12.7):

By the seal of "vowels" and "consonants",
Each and every (activity) will be achieved.

The third part concerns the meditation on the Caṇḍālī which assists these (practices).

It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

It is explained that the fire
Of uncorrupted bliss blazes forth,
And that (the seminal point) is burnt,
And milked from above.

At the junction where the three energy channels meet directly four finger-spans below the navel, the mind apprehends the short syllable A, of the nature of fire, the size of a mustard seed and extremely hot to touch. Dependent on that, a flame blazes forth, the size of a thumb, which fills the Interior of the three energy channels and centres within the body, so that deeds and obscurations are burned. One meditates that a stream of nectar consisting of the white and red pure-essences or seeds descends from the syllable HAM in the crown centre, and so pervades the entire Interior of the body with bliss and emptiness. This meditation is the genuine skillful means which generates warmth, and gives rise to the pristine cognition of bliss and emptiness.[23]

The latter section (of the overview) concerns the path of liberation (grol-lam).[24] This has two parts, namely, the meditation which entails contemplation on an apparitional deity, and the meditation which entails contemplation on the emptiness or real nature. As to the former: In the disposition where one meditates on the apparitional body of the deity, any conceptual events or feelings which arise are retained by the creation stage; and through the force of that, all the enlightened attributes of contemplation and so forth are accomplished. This is because the nature of one-pointed mind is the essence and causal basis of contemplation.

As to the latter: One settles into equilibrium, without wavering towards all that appears and without fabricating a duality between the objects which appear during meditative equipoise and the Intellect which apprehends them. Thereby one abides in the disposition of the non-dual truth. During the aftermath (of that meditative equipoise), one should refine the expressive power, according to the Great Perfection, through which appearances are apparitional, and awareness is naturally liberated reality. When this has been refined, there arises in a coalescent manner the tranquility in which the mind abides and the higher insight in which the truth of the absence of inherent existence is realised.[25] When one has meditated in this way on higher insight retained by tranquility, the head of conflicting emotions is crushed down and their base is uprooted.

It says in the Extensive Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rgyas-pa):

Through tranquility the head of conflicting emotions is crushed down,
And through genuine higher Insight their base is uprooted.

In the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871) these points are expressed in the following words:[26]

One should know that through higher insight.
Excellentlly endowed with tranquility,
Conflicting emotions are subdued.
Tranquility should indeed be sought at the outset.
And it is achieved with manifest joy
In freedom from mundane desire.

And also:[27]

One who has disciplined through meditative equipoise
The mind which resembles a rutting elephant...

The result (of this contemplation on the path of liberation) is that the excellent enlightened attributes, provisional and conclusive, will be accomplished.

Now, for those Individuals who have fewer conceptions and coarser conflicting emotions, the path of skillful means is revealed in accordance with both the upper and lower doors (of the body); and for those who have a larger share of conceptions the sequence of meditation on the deity and the non-conceptual (reality) is revealed.[28]

[Interlinear Commentary on the Inner Perfection Stage (462.5-463.4):]

[This has two parts, of which (the first), concerning meditation on bliss and emptiness, (comments on Ch. 13.9):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan stong-pa-nyid gzugs snang-ba-ste. The elements are regarded as the nature of the ground or emptiness, known in the causal tradition of the greater vehicle as Prajñāpāramitā.

[2]:

These corresponding external forms are respectively earth, water, fire, air and space. On the term "great element" ('byung-ba chen-po) see also above. Ch. 11, note 2.

[3]:

N.L.

[4]:

I.e. the five external elements are understood as the five female consorts, the five inner components are understood as the five male consorts, and the sense-organs, objects, times and awarenesses are understood as the male and female bodhisattvas and gatekeepers. See also above, Chs. 1, 6.

[5]:

N.L.

[6]:

On the importance of this immediate recognition of the inherent nature of the five poisons or conflicting emotions (pañcakleśa) at the moment of their arising, see also above. Ch. 11, note 1.

[7]:

The basic creation stage (utpattikrama) is the subjectmatter of Chs. 11-12. Here, where utpattikrama is seen as an Integral part of the entire path, including sampannakrama and rdzogs-pa chen-po. there is a greater emphasis on the inner experiences which connect this stage to the others, rather than on structural visualisation.

[8]:

The coded language of this verse is explained in the following paragraphs. The "upper gate" (steng-sgo) refers to the energy centres of crown, throat, heart and navel within ones own body. The "lower gate" ('og-sgo) refers to the secret or sexual centres of oneself and ones yogic partner. The former, with reference to the "three lifegiving trees" (srog-shing) or energy channels. Includes the practice of gtum-mo, and the "milking of the cow of space" (nam-mkha'i ba), on which see also above. Ch. 3. p. 516, note 82; The latter generates the sixteen delights through which the sixteen levels are realised. The "three steps" in which seminal fluids are "drawn in" (bkugs-pa gsum) indicate the upward or inward, downward or outward, and balancing or retentive action of vital energy. The "five-sequences of seminal enlightened mind" (sems-lnga'i rim) refer respectively to its activation from an inactive state, to its descent through the energy channels and its coming to rest, to its retention and consequent stability, to its being drawing inwards and its induction upwards through the energy channels, and to its pervasion of the entire body. Cf. kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, spyi-don yid-kyi mun-sel, p. 69b; also see above, p. 46, note 97.

[9]:

On these three practices, see below respectively pp. 1007-1010, 1010-1018, 1018-1019

[10]:

N. L.

[11]:

On this mental refinement, which finds its highest expression in the thod-rgal practices, see below, pp. 1022-1044. The "five pure essences" (dyangs-ma lnga) are the elements and components in their most subtle material form of light. See also. NSTB, glossary of enumerations, under "six pure-essences," (the sixth being the mind itself in a refined state).

[12]:

This is the sampannakrama experience developed out of the sbyor-ba practices, which have been described from the standpoint of utpattikrama in Ch. 11.

[13]:

On the dga'-ba bzhi. see also above, pp. 908-910.

[14]:

The structure outlined in this verse is explained in the following paragraph. The four centres (gnas-bzhi) are those of crown, throat, heart and navel.

[15]:

The entire path as conceived in the causal vehicles, from sambhāramārga to the eleventh level, Samantaprabhā, is comprised by the downward motion (yas-rim) of "seminal enlightened mind" from the crown centre to the tip of the penis.

[16]:

The two impurities (snyigs-ma gnyis) are the pure-essences in their unrefined state. On the shes-rab ye-shes-kyi dbang, see also above, Ch. 9, pp. 802-803.

[17]:

The experiences of this bde-ba chen-po'i dbang-bskur or 'dod-chags chen-po 'i dbang-bskur. on which also see above. Ch. 9, P. 802 and note 69, are described in the following paragraphs.

[18]:

Through the upward motion (mas-rim) of the "seminal enlightened mind" from the tip of the penis to the crown centre and thence to its pervasion of the entire body, the entire structure of the resultant paths and levels are comprised, including the higher Buddha-levels.

[19]:

On these higher levels, see also above, pp. 661, 672-673, 964-968.

[20]:

On these ṣadabhijñā, see also Ch. 3, note 56.

[21]:

For an explanation of this verse, which considers the major & minor marks from the resultant standpoint, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 47bff., and notes. "The vital energies become radiant" (sic! lung-gsal), "twofold bliss of vowels and consonants" (sic! ā-li kā-li bde-ba-nyid).

[22]:

"Receptiveness" (bzod-pa, Sanskrit kṣānti) indicates an experiential state of the prayogamārga. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 47b. Pt. 3. PP. 121a-131b, and kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, grub-mtha'i mdzod. pp. 142-146.

[23]:

On Caṇḍāli (gtum-mo), the channel where this practice is activated, see also H.V. Guenther, The Life and Teaching of Nāropa. pp. 53-61.

[24]:

On the grol-lam stage of sampannakrama, which is contrasted with the thabs-lam and is not to be confused with the sgrol practices outlined above in Ch. 11. see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, under the respective paths of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga.

[25]:

On this unity of tranquility (śamatha) and higher insight (vipaśyana), which is achieved through the integration of periods of meditative absorption (thun) and their aftermath (rjes-thob), see also below, p. 1026.

[26]:

Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra. VIII, 4.

[27]:

N.L.

[28]:

Cf. NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 4, pp. 156a-162b, under Mahāyoga.

Text 13.9 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.9]

Through the display of the pristine cognition of bliss

When the essential seminal points are united.

Offerings are made to joyous pristine cognition. [9]

[Tibetan]

snying-po thig-le mnyam-sbyor-bas /

bde-ba'i ye-shes rol-mo-yis /

ye-shes dgyes-la mchod-pa 'bul / [9]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Comentary on the Inner Perfection Stage (462.5-463.4):]

[This has two parts, of which (the first), concerning meditation on bliss and emptiness, (comments on Ch. 13.9):]

Through the (-yis) supremely secret display of (rol-mo) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of bliss (bde-ba'i) and emptiness which is obtained when the essential seminal points (snying-po thig-le) of the white and red pure-essences of the male and female consorts intermingle and are united (mnyam-sbyor-bas) at the tip of the vajra and of the lotus, offerings are made to the deities who have been invited into the maṇḍala of the secret centre. Then, when these are Inducted upwards by the vital energy, offerings (mchod-pa) of non-dual bliss and emptiness are made ('bul) in the energy channels of the four centres and throughout the body to (la) the naturally abiding maṇḍala of the buddhas and to one's own mind-as-such which have become exceedingly Joyous (dgyes) in that most blissful pristine cognition (ye-shes).

[The second part, concerning the result of that (meditation, comments on Ch. 13.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.10]

Through that merit, free from corruption.

Manifesting in and of itself

As a magical display of pristine cognition.
There is derived the infinite maṇḍala of the display
And the supreme (field). [10]

[Tibetan]

zag-pa med-pa'i bsod-nams-kyis /
ye-shes sgyu-mar rang-snang-ba /
rol-mo dkyil-'khor mtha'-yas mchog / [10]

Commentary:

[The second part, concerning the result of that (meditation, comments on Ch. 13.10):]

Through the merit (bsod-nams-kyis) of these offerings which have been made, free from corruption (zag-pa med-pa), the three provisional kinds of awareness-holder and the eight (common) accomplishments are obtained, and there is derived the conclusive field of the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, manifesting (snang-ba) Buddha-hood in and of itself (rang) as a magical display of pristine cognition (ye-shes sgyu-ma). This is the infinite (mtha'-yas)[1] maṇḍala of (-i dkyil-'khor) of the five enlightened families of the display (rol-mo) of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, immeasurable in its array. And then, the conclusive result is obtained in the supreme (mchog) field of the buddha-body of reality, the ground of Samantabhadra.[2]

[The Secret Stage of Inner Radiance (463.4-477.3):]

The third part (of the extensive exegesis—see p. 1001) concerns the secret stage of inner radiance. It includes an overview and an Interlinear commentary.

The former (463-4-474.6) has two aspects, namely, the nature of the inner radiance which is to be known, and the sequence of experiential cultivation once it has been known.

As to the first of these, it says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Since the primordially manifest and perfect
Doctrine of the Buddhas abides in all corporeal beings,
The spontaneous maṇḍala of the conquerors
Abides in the body of all corporeal beings,
And it maintains inestimable peaceful and wrathful forms.
Which become radiant through the power of experience,
In this lifetime, or in the Intermediate state.

Thus, the maṇḍala of the ground or Indestructible expanse which abides in Akaniṣṭha is said to be present within the energycentres (of the body) in the form of clusters (of deities), which depend on the pure-essences or seminal points of relative appearance, in the nature of five subtle and glowing lights. As such, the maṇḍala of the forty-two

conquerors is within the heart-centre of all sentient beings, and the maṇḍala of the fifty-eight Blood-Drinkers is within their crown-centres.[3] One who has experienced the creation and perfection stages will radiantly perceive the natural expression of these maṇḍalas. However, they remain Invisible until one is liberated from the snare of (the path of) maturation because one is still obscured by the coarse body with its flesh and blood. Even though one is exceedingly steadfast in these creation and perfection stages, and one's mind has become exceedingly radiant as the body of the deity in a rainbow-like manner, one is not liberated from the snare of the body; but as soon as one is liberated therefrom, one perceives the meaning of the great seal and becomes an awareness-holder of maturation, who attains liberation in the body of the deity during the Intermediate state and then acts on behalf of sentient beings.

Then, dependent on the creation and perfection stages, when this very body transcends birth and death, and obscurations have to some extent been purified, one becomes an awareness-holder with power over the lifespan and an awareness-holder of the great seal, who attain Buddha-hood without relinquishing their bodies. Then, as an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence, or Buddha-hood itself, one is manifestly transformed into that maṇḍala.

It is because this Akaniṣṭha is present primordially within oneself that Buddha-hood is attained through the visualisations of the creation and perfection stages.[4]

Indeed, the pure fields of Buddha-body and pristine cognition are not sought or accomplished in other world-systems of the ten directions, as our text says (Ch. 12.14):

From any of the ten directions and four times
The perfect Buddha will not be found.
Mind-as-such is the perfect Buddha.
Do not search elsewhere for the Buddha.

The latter (is the experiential cultivation of inner radiance): In a pleasant darkened house, one should assume the seven postures of Vairocana, without moving.[5]

It says in the Sequence of the Path of the Magical Net (P. 4736):

Therefore, with blissful joy
Which is superabundant and uniform.
One assumes the guise of venerable Vairocana,
Endowed with seven postures.
And sits with an attitude
Free from grasping and striving.

This passage therefore teaches three ways in which one should be unmoved.

The seven postures are crossed legs, equipoised hands, the waist straight as a rod of dong-rtse coins,[6] the neck gently bent, the eyes

focussed on the tip of the nose, the tongue meeting the palate, and the lips and teeth set in their natural positions. In particular, from the space between the eyebrows one should fix one's gaze on space to a distance of twelve inches, one should not speak, and one should settle into the disposition of space without the mind thinking upon anything. One who has done this for one day, or for three or seven days, will perceive signs of smoke and so forth. Similarly one who has done this for fourteen days, or for twenty-one or one month, will firstly perceive smoke-like (apparitions) and then appearances which resemble clouds, mirage, fire-flies, butter lamps, and sunlight.[7]

It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

One encounters (apparitions)
Which resemble mirage, smoke, clouds, fireflies,
Butter-lamps, and sunlight.

When these occur, one should remain (seated), rejecting all outer, inner and secret activities of the body, speech and mind.

The same text says:

One should abandon all breaks and intervals
Based on cause and result.
And the conceptual elaboration
Of the nine kinds of doctrinal conduct.[8]
One should not even undertake
That which is present in the mind
Because one would be distracted by the symbolic.

Having experienced the yoga of darkness in this way, during the daytime one settles Into a disposition without recollection or thought, maintaining the previous posture and folded hands.

The same text says:

Through a sequence which is non-referential,
Extremely non-referential, and subsequently non-referential,
Without abiding, without thought and without covetousness,
And beyond conceptual objects of speech and thought,
The expanse of the real, pristine cognition becomes present.
Naturally radiant and unwavering.
It coalesces tranquility and higher insight.

This is Indeed exceedingly non-referential and so forth because the external objects of attraction, the internal mind which apprehends them, and one's own body and speech which are in between are not grasped.

At that time, there is a coalescence of tranquility, which is non-conceptual in all respects, and higher Insight which is radiant. When one has persevered in this course for six months, one year, and one year two months or four months, the coarse movements of the upper vital energy cease. One obtains power over the vital energy of pristine cognition, and

then obtains successively the status of the awareness-holders of maturation, power over the lifespan, and the great seal. Then, after one thousand six hundred years (i.e. sixteen lifespans) one achieves the deeds of the Buddhas.[9]

This text (Secret Nucleus. Ch. 9.32) says:

The genuine accomplishment of empowered awareness
Will be achieved in six or twelve months.
Or in fourteen, or in sixteen.
Within sixteen lifespans, (one will obtain)
The spontaneously perfect five Buddha-bodies.

This applies at the time when the uncorrupted state is accomplished by means of inner radiance.

As for the signs (of this realisation), there are four kinds which respectively resemble the diverse appearances of the five lights, the seminal points, the blazing of gemstones, and the (solar and lunar) disks (eclipsed) by Rāhu.

It says in the Tantra of Mañjuśrī (T. 543):

There is a glorious orb.
Blazing forth fine light.
And blazing light appears in the hands.

And also:

Pristine cognition has a dazzling appearance:
There are butter-lamps
(Which dispel the darkness) of living creatures,
Lamps of pristine cognition.
And brilliant garlands, pleasant to behold.

And in the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

Through the association of "gemstone" and "ocean",
There are resplendent disks of light
Some of which radiate in the maṇḍala of the sky.

Now, the glorious orb and the "gemstone" refer to the heart. The "ocean" refers to the eyes; and arising through their association are the forms of emptiness which appear in the sky. Such apparitions are known as the visionary appearance of actual reality (chos-nyid mngon-sum-gyi snang-ba).[10]

When, during these (apparitions), one's lifespan comes to an end. In the next life one will be born in a pure Buddha-field, and having obtained power over the lifespan, one will attain Buddha-hood. The enlightened attributes of this (first visionary appearance) are referred to as "secret seminal points" (gsang-ba'i thig-le) and so forth.

Then, through experience, the movements of the vital energy of the five elements subside in pristine cognition. This pervasion by the natural appearance of the five pristine cognitions is known as the visionary appearance of ever increasing contemplative experience (nyams-gong 'phel-gyi snang-ba).[11]

Then, derived from that experience, the five enlightened families of the Buddha-fields are perceived; and this is known as the visionary appearance which reaches the limit of awareness (rig-pa tshad-phebs-kyi snang-ba). It is said that one encounters all maṇḍalas without exception as ornaments. [12]

Then, once the Induction of the vital energy of the five elements into the five pristine cognitions has ceased to expand, all appearances become like a cloudless sky; and this is known as the visionary appearance of the cessation of reality (chos-nyid zad-pa'i snang-ba). At this point the spontaneous presence (of all-surpassing realisation) approaches.[13]

Now, the first two visionary appearances are perceived as the support for the awareness-holder of maturation; the (visionary appearance) which reaches the limit (of awareness) is a support for the awareness-holder with power over the lifespan; the visionary appearance of cessation (of reality) is the support for the awareness-holder of the great seal; and once these have been perfected, the Buddha-level and the status of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence will be obtained.

There are some who, confusing this tradition, say that this occurs after the emanational body and the buddha-body of perfect rapture have entered into the (thirteenth level). Great Rotating Mass (of Syllables). They, however, do not discriminate between the bodies of rapture and emanation which appear on the path and those two bodies of rapture and emanation which are conclusive.[14]

During these visionary appearances, the pristine cognition which appears, without being grasped, arises as an inner experience.

It says in the Sequence the Path (P. 4736):

Not designated as extremes or middle,
Intrinsic awareness itself,
Free from subject-object dichotomy,
Appears there in a non-referential manner.

During the first of these visionary appearances, the three media (of body, speech and mind) abide in a relaxing manner, whereby one obtains the three kinds of warmth, namely bliss of body, radiance of speech and non-conceptualisation of mind, and one obtains power over the coarse exhalation and inhalation of the breath.

This same text says:

When this is prolonged without activity.
Warmth emerges in body, speech and mind.

A subtle receptiveness is obtained,
And one obtains power over the moving breath.
One arrives at the genuine fundamental reality,
And definitively experiences the three kinds of warmth.

Now, as external signs (of these visionary appearances), light and apparitions of the seminal points are perceived because the elements, on their consummation, become an activity field of syllables. As internal signs, one obtains receptiveness in body and speech; and the five conflicting emotions decrease; contemplation becomes firm and the vision itself is diffused.

The same text says:

Now (the signs of) the former are both outer and inner:
Outwardly, the elements are perceived
As an actual activity field.
And lotus-lights and so forth are perceived.
Inwardly, receptiveness is particularly obtained.
And the course of the five rivers (= conflicting emotions)
Is gradually interrupted.

Virtuous dreams are also perceived. As the text says:

Even the dreams of one who abides in Yoga
Nakedly emerge and are immaculate.

During the second visionary appearance, all things are realised in apparition-like forms and so forth, and the vision is greatly diffused.

It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

The nature of awareness free from subject-object dichotomy
Is uncovered, as a magical display of pristine cognition.
It is described as the essence in which water
And the moon's reflection in water are equally radiant.
Whatever conceptions or signs arise.
They naturally appear as a magical display
Of pristine cognition.
Thus desire, hatred, hope and doubt do not emerge:
These are nothing but the magical display of pristine cognition.

At that time, there emerges the compassion which is powerless but (to act) on behalf of living beings.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

Through the experience of one
Who has obtained such magical display.
The phenomena of saṃsāra are captured
By immeasurable enlightened mind.
Amazement is generated at both unbewildered
And bewildered (phenomena):

For they are present without objective basis.
All things within the range of this life
Are perceived as a dream or as a magical display.

At this time there are Immeasurable enlightened attributes which arise.

The same text says:

There are enlightened attributes equal to the limits of space,
And the perceptual range is identical to Buddha-hood.
Endowed with the great provision of merit
Which is acquired through causal bases,
This great unattached pristine cognition
Is the yoga not to be sought in a future life.[15]

Power over the lifespan is thus obtained, and even in dreams one perceives the magical display, whereby there is neither clinging nor attraction to all things. At that time the body becomes as light as cotton wool, the exhalation and inhalation of breath is not felt, and there are no bacteria or lice present inside or outside the body. Such signs are possessed.

The third visionary appearance is that in which all appearances manifest in and of themselves as the maṇḍala of deities.

It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

The maṇḍala of the components and so forth
Appears as the deities:
When, in the manner of a reflection on a clear ocean.
The intrinsic awareness of all things radiates as the deity.
Without singularity or multiplicity.
And that radiance is without object and unwavering,
This is said by the Conqueror to be the essence of Yoga.
This nature is emanated, and yoga is emanated,
Also, the peaceful and wrathful deities
Who discipline venomous (beings) are emanated.
The circles are emanated, and the seals are emanated.
The clusters are emanated, and the maṇḍala is emanated.
Because of this universal emanation, the result is emanated.
The radiant experience of this emanation is called Yoga.

These appearances become manifest through meditation on the maṇḍala of the Thousand Buddhas and so forth,[16] and they become actually manifest through inner radiance. At that time, there are also signs through which the truth of this particularly sublime level is perceived.

In particular, it says in the same text:

The six supernormal cognitive powers.
And the five basic realities are perfected.
In superior and mediocre instances.
These become radiant and perform acts of discipline

Throughout the countries and continents.

The five basic realities whereby pristine cognition is obtained are the buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, each of which has five subdivisions.[17] Their radiance is perceived by clairvoyance even during intervals (of sleep), and thence, there are no dreams.

During the fourth visionary appearance, one is liberated from the snare of the body and its appearance.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

In the guise of the Buddha-body of pristine cognition,
One is released from the elements in the indestructible body.

This is an effortless and spontaneous accomplishment derived from the previous experience.

The same text continues:

Through one's own unwavering perception and experience.
And by striving in a purposeful sequence.
The power over the perfection of all paths is reached.
And there is spontaneous accomplishment.
Unconnected with yoga and innately purified of defilements.

The enlightened attributes of this (visionary appearance) are also cited in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

Without wavering from meditative equipoise,
In worlds which equal the number of atoms
In ten hundred thousand chlliocosms. And
in fields which equal the number of atoms
In ten hundred thousand "countless" Buddha-fields.
Acts of discipline are performed
By the emanational forms of hunter, courtesan, and so forth.

Once these four visionary appearances have been concluded, the resultant three supreme buddha-levels become spontaneously present; and at that time, there are also twenty-five enlightened attributes (or realities). [18] Among them, the first (group of five) is that of the five buddha-bodies, namely, the Buddha-body of reality which is free from conceptual elaboration, the Buddha-body of perfect rapture which is great inner radiance, the emanational Buddha-body which is indefinite and diversified, the buddha-body of awakening in which renunciation and realisation are concluded, and the Buddha-body of indestructible reality which is great and unchanging.

It says in the Sequence of the Path (P. 4736):

There are the natural Buddha-bodies of reality.
Perfect rapture, diverse emanation.
Awakening, and indestructible reality.

The five kinds of Buddha-speech are as follows: There is the great indescribable speech of the body of reality, on which the same text says:

Through the uncreated genuine and supreme Buddha-speech.
The unspeakable and indescribable is understood.

There is the unimpeded, naturally radiant and mirror-like speech of the body of perfect rapture, on which the same text says:

By perceiving the body of the mighty lord,
Symbolised by its eight mirror-like attributes.[19]
The meaning of indestructible reality is manifested
In the minds of those Bodhisattvas
Who are great spiritual warriors.

The speech of the emanational body has sixty aspects,[20] as the same text says:

There are six categories of basic and ancillary attributes.
Which are heard as Brahma speech
By the fleshy ears of corporeal beings.

The speech of the body of awakening is the naturally radiant pristine cognition, on which the same text also says:

The pristine cognition of awareness, in its five names.
Is indeed radiantly manifested like the sun
Through the blessing of the garland of syllables.
In all the naturally secret tantras.

The speech of the body of indestructible reality is the indivisibility of sound and emptiness, as the same text says:

Resounding in the manner of sound, and indivisible,
Vision and hearing occur through its power.

Now, in this context, the self-manifesting body of perfect rapture is subsumed within the buddha-body of reality, because it is exclusively within the perceptual range of Buddha-hood.[21]

Among the five kinds of buddha-mind, the first is the pristine cognition of emptiness, which is radiant and without substantial existence.[22]

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

It is said to be primordially radiant and empty
In the manner of space.

The mirror-like pristine cognition is radiant and without conceptualising thought:

It radiates in a mirror-like manner, without object.

The pristine cognition of sameness is radiant and without the duality of good and evil:

It is sameness, without alteration, and
Without acceptance or rejection.

The pristine cognition of discernment is radiant and does not confuse the general and particular characteristics of things:

Because it is none other than the expanse of the real.
It radiates without dividing consciousness
From its particular and general (characteristics).

The pristine cognition of earnest accomplishment effortlessly achieves activity for the sake of oneself and others:

The two kinds of benefit are accomplished
Through its spontaneous and perfect activity.

These comprise the buddha-mind associated with the five buddha-bodies.

As for the five kinds of enlightened attributes, (the first) refers to the nature of the pure Buddha-field of awareness without spatial dimensions, which pervasively appears throughout the expanse of reality:

Without independent existence, the awareness manifests
As the Buddha-fields of the ten directions without exception.
Which are the accumulated wish-fulfilling clouds of mind.

There is the appearance of awareness as the celestial palace:

The spontaneously perfect awareness.
Which manifests in and of itself.
Is the celestial palace, in nature
Free from the subject-object dichotomy.
Neither supportive nor supported.
It is the abode of everything.

There is the awareness which appears as light-rays:

Because its nature radiates without obscuration.
Its diverse light-rays radiate in the ten directions.

There is the awareness which itself appears as the seats and thrones:

Because all the resultant (attributes) such as power are perfected,
The details of the five seats become manifest.[23]

And there is the awareness which itself appears as the ornaments:

Because they are spontaneously perfect and not to be abandoned,

The ornaments of the diverse great maṇḍalas are present.

These (enlightened attributes) refer to the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array.

The five kinds of enlightened activity are the five types of deeds, namely, the deeds which mollify and pacify the minds of those to be trained, the deeds which satisfy and enrich sentient beings with the doctrine and materials, the deeds which subjugate living beings, those which uproot venomous beings by wrathful sorcery, and the enlightened activity spontaneously accomplished by the lords of all the enlightened families in all directions and spheres without distinction between those which are close and those which are remote:

The different activities of discipline
Comprise the four methods which are displayed
By peaceful and wrathful deities and Mātariś
For pacifying violations (of the commitments).
These perform acts of discipline in an appropriate manner.
In association with the (first) four enlightened families.
While (the activity) of spontaneous accomplishment
Is associated with the enlightened family of activity.

This (resultant reality) is the most secret, hidden and concealed meaning belonging to the Tantra (of the Secret Nucleus). It has been portrayed (here) in accordance with (the exegesis) found in the Lamp of Precious Inner Radiance ('od-gsal rin-po-che'i sgron-ma), which was composed by the great master Padmākara.[24]

When this (instruction) is combined with the Oral Instructions of the Moment of Death ('da'-ka-ma'i gdams-ngag), which is the work of the great master Vimalamitra, those of low acumen should be liberated during the intermediate state of maturation. Therefore, at the time of death one should not waver from the disposition of the creation stage in which the maṇḍala of deities is present, and of the perfection stage which is without conceptual elaboration. In this way, during the intermediate state, one will attain Buddha-hood in the body of the deity.[25]

For those of basest acumen who do not obtain maturation, it is explained that they should focus the mind within the inner radiance of the heart-centre, and then, transforming the vital energies of sun and moon within it, eject that globe of light with equilibrium into a pure land. Thereby, in the next life, one will obtain the status of an awareness-holder either of maturation or with power over the lifespan, and attain Buddha-hood in a pure land.[26]

There are also some who say that one will be (completely) liberated by recognising the maṇḍalas of the peaceful and wrathful deities which arise during the intermediate state, but it is certain that one obtains liberation therein only after obtaining the status of an awareness-holder of the great seal or of spontaneous presence.[27]

This is the actual foundation of the points expressed in this chapter,

and it is most profound and extensive because it introduces the meaning of inner radiance. Through these topics, the exegesis of the overview has been completed.

[The interlinear commentary (on the secret inner radiance, 474.6-477.3) has three aspects.]

[Among them the first concerns the recognition of the nature of the ground or inner radiance. (It comments on Ch. 13.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, phyogs-bcu mun-sel, p. 463.4, reads bsam-yas for mtha'-yas.

[2]:

On the distinctions between the three provisional kinds of vidyādhara, the anābhogavidyādhara, and the conclusive dharmakāya or Buddha-level, see above. Ch. 12, pp. 959-976.

[3]:

Cf. Ch. 1, pp. 403-404.

[4]:

See Ch. 1, pp. 403-404, where Akaniṣṭha is said to be present in the heart-centre. The point that Buddha-hood through the path would be impossible but for the primordially present pure ground of Buddha-hood is reiterated in texts of both causal and resultant vehicles. See NSTB, Book 1, Pts. 3-4, passim.

[5]:

These seven postures are outlined in the following paragraph. On the importance of a darkened house (mtshan-mo'i khang-pa) for the "darkness retreat" (mun-mtshams) conducive to the experience of 'od-gsal, see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, under the perfection stage of Mahāyoga.

[6]:

Tibetan dong-rtse: coins with a central hole held together by a rod.

[7]:

On these signs of inner-radiance, see Ch. 9, PP. 827-828.

[8]:

The standard enumeration is of ten kinds of doctrinal conduct (chos-spyod bcu), viz. writing, offering, veneration, listening, retention, reading, exegesis, daily recitation, thought and meditation. Cf. Madhyāntavibhāga. Among these, the last is the only one recommended in the present context.

[9]:

The significance of this period of time is discussed above, pp. 853-854.

[10]:

On the "four visionary appearances" (snang-ba bzhi) see also above, p. 858. The structures through which these visionary appearances are experienced are also known as the "six lamps" (sgron-ma bzhi). The lamp of the "far-sighted watery eyes" (rgyang-zhags chu'i sgron-ma) perceives the apparitions of inner radiance. It is connected to the lamp of the "flesh of the heart" (citta sha'i sgron-ma) by means of the lamp of the "soft white channels" (dkar-'jam rtsa'i sgron-ma). Then, the lamp of "naturally present discriminative awareness" (shes-rab rang-byung-gi sgron-ma) is the basis of the apparitions of inner radiance which are perceived by the first three lamps. The lamp of "the pure expanse of awareness" (rig-pa dbyings-kyi sgron-ma) is the ornament of that apparition, and the lamp which is the "emptiness of the seminal point" (thig-le stong-pa'i sgron-ma) is the characteristic of that apparition. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 204a-211b, on these lamps and visionary appearances.

[11]:

Cf. previous note.

[12]:

Cf. note 73.

[13]:

Cf. note 73.

[14]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa here differentiates between the resultant emanational modes of buddha-body, as expressed in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 46b-60a, and those acquired as a stage on the path towards dharmakāya.

[15]:

I.e. the practices of thod-rgal and 'od-gsal described in this section are held to have the potential to grant their result within this present lifetime.

[16]:

The names of the thousand buddhas associated with this aeon are

enumerated in the Bhadrakalpikasūtra. See also above, Ch. 3. note 54.

[17]:

These twenty-five resultant realities ('bras-bu'i chos nyi-shu-rtsa-nga) are enumerated below. pp. 1034-1039. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 161b-162a.

[18]:

Tibetan yon-tan nyi-shu-rtsa-nga is identical to the 'bras-bu'i chos nyi-shu-rtsa-nga. See previous note.

[19]:

Tibetan me-long lta-bur chos-brgyad: This enumeration is identical to the "eight similes of apparition" (sgyu-ma'i dpe-brgyad), which are explained in the eight chapters of the author's sgyu-ma'i ngal-gso, i.e., dream, illusion, optical illusion, mirage, reflection of the moon in water, echo, castle in the sky, and phantom. Cf. NSTB, glossary of enumerations.

[20]:

On these sixty aspects of Buddha-speech (gsung yan-lag drug-cu). see above. Ch. 7. notes 8-9.

[21]:

I.e. the speech classified here as that of the sambhogakāya belongs to the "extraneously manifest" sambhagakāya, which appears to tenth level Bodhisattvas, and not to the self-manifest sambhogakāya of Ghanavyūha. On this distinction, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 357-389.

[22]:

Tibetan stong-pa-nyid-kyi ye-shes; This is equivalent to the dharmadhātujñāna.

[23]:

See above. Ch. 1, pp. 383-389, for an explanation of the enlightened attributes (yon-tan) associated with the five thrones of the vimāna.

[24]:

This text belongs to the mkha'-'gro snying-thig. See NSTB. Book 2. Pt. 4, pp. 213-215.

[25]:

This text, which belongs to the bi-ma snying-thig. NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 215-238, concerns the means of applying the practices of thod-rgal at the moment of death in order to attain Buddha-hood in the post-death bar-

do state.

[26]:

This is the practice known as 'pho-ba. For its application on behalf of others through the rites of wrathful "liberation" (sgrol). see also above. Ch. 11, pp. 914-922.

[27]:

On the distinctions between these types of vidyādhara and their preliminary status of rnam-smin rig-'dzin and tshe-dbang rig-'dzin, see also pp. 959-976, 853-854.

Text 13.11 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.11]

The secret seminal points are the expanse of real nature.
They are the actuality of all the Buddhas. [11]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i thig-le-nyid-kyi dbyings /
de-ni sangs-rgyas kun-gyi dngos / [11]

Commentary:

[The interlinear commentary (on the secret inner radiance, 474.6-477.3) has three aspects.]

[Among them the first concerns the recognition of the nature of the ground or inner radiance. (It comments on Ch. 13.11):]

The maṇḍalas of Buddha-body and pristine cognition, which are the secret seminal points (gsang-ba'i thig-le) of inner radiance, abiding in the four energy centres and especially in the heartcentre, are the expanse of (-kyi-dbyings) reality or the real nature (nyid) which is spontaneously present. Naturally abiding in the forms of Akaniṣṭha, the Bounteous Array, they are (de-ni) spontaneously present as the actuality of all the (kun-gyi dngos) primordial buddhas (sangs-rgyas), in this way, the three buddha-bodies are said to abide within oneself; and among them, the bodies of rapture and emanation are the basis of manifest appearance.

[The second concerns the recognition of the appearance of pristine cognition in accordance with the path. (It comments on Ch. 13.12):]

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Text 13.12 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.12]

Manifestly perfect in the ten directions and four times.

The faces which identify body, speech, attributes.

Activities, and mind, without exception, are perceived.

This mastery is the genuine supreme nature.

For one who abides in the maṇḍala, the maṇḍala itself

Becomes spontaneously present as the maṇḍala of perfection,

And, as its ornaments, one encounters all maṇḍalas without exception.

[12]

[Tibetan]

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir mngon-rdzogs-pa /
sku-gsung yon-tan 'phrin-las thugs /
ma-lus bdag-nyid zhal-mthong-ba /
dbang-sgyur mchog-nyid dam-pa yin /
dkyil-'khor-la gnas dkyil-'khor-nyid /
rdzogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor lhun-gyis grub /
rgyan-du dkyil-'khor ma-lus thogs / [12]

Commentary:

[The second concerns the recognition of the appearance of pristine cognition in accordance with the path. (It comments on Ch. 13.12):]

By meditating on this maṇḍala, the ten signs including light and seminal points are naturally perceived as the apparitional objects of contemplation.[1] Among them, the faces (zhal) are perceived (mthong-ba) which identify (bdag-nyid) without exception (ma-lus) all the maṇḍalas of the body, speech, attributes, activities, and mind (sku gsung yon-tan phrin-las thugs) of all the buddhas who have attained manifestly perfect (mngon-rdzogs-pa) Buddha-hood in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir).

It says in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

When the truth of signlessness is perceived.

The maṇḍalas of all the buddhas are perceived.

This text explains that by seeing one thing all things are seen, that this is the conclusive Buddha-body of reality, and that one who has experienced the uncreated truth will perceive the faces of the Buddhas.

This mastery (dbang-sgyur) through contemplation of the naturally pure buddha or mind-as-such is therefore the genuine supreme nature (mchog-nyid dam-pa yin) of all things, because it is the meditation on the

conclusive truth of abiding nature.

It says in the Sūtra Requested by Jñānottara (T. 82):

The supreme contemplation
Which is dispositionally unwavering.
Concerns the nucleus of all things.

When one has meditated in this way. for one who abides in the maṇḍala (dkyil-[2] khor-la gnas) of natural expression and the maṇḍala created by contemplation, there ensues meditation on the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of self-manifesting inner radiance. This itself (nyid) then becomes spontaneously present as the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor lhun-gyis grub) of (-'i) the perfection (rdzogs-pa) stage of discriminative awareness, the great pristine cognition, so that increasingly higher enlightened attributes of the path are perfectly actualised. in particular, when one's own perception is transformed into the field of the five enlightened families, in all outer (phenomena) and the inner centres of the energy channels, one encounters (thogs) all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of the different deities without exception (ma-lus) as its ornaments (rgyan-du) of natural awareness or pristine cognition. These, too, are adorned with thousands of enlightened attributes. When all apprehension of them has ceased, one arrives at the cessation of reality, which is the primordially pure nature of the levels and paths.[3]

[The result (of this meditation comments on Ch. 13.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For the ten signs of inner radiance ('od-gsal rtags-bcu), see above, pp. 827-828.

[2]:

On the terms "hidden" (gab) and "concealed" (sbas) with reference to the meaning of the tantra-texts, see above, pp. 321-322, and below, p. 998.

[3]:

This is the fourth visionary appearance (chos-nyid zad-pa'i snang-ba) described above, pp. 858, 1029, 1034. The four maṇḍalas identified in this verse respectively refer to the natural ground (as in Ch. 1), the visualised ground (as in Ch. 6), the inner radiance of the body-maṇḍala (as in Chs. 11-13) and the discriminative awareness of it (as in Chs. 11-13).

Text 13.13 (Commentary)

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Through the union of the perfect maṇḍala
The maṇḍalas of spirituality entirely emerge.
(One becomes) the lord who trains the maṇḍalas of space and time.
And by (deeds) which liberate the maṇḍalas of magical display.
One enacts the maṇḍala without object or subject. [13]

[Tibetan]

rdzogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor mnyam-sbyor-las /
thugs-rje'i dkyil-'khor yongs-kyis 'byung /
phyogs-dus dkyil-'khor 'dul-ba'i mgon /
sgyu-ma'i dkyil-'khor sgrol-ba-yis /
bya-byed med-par dkyil-'khor spyod / [13]

Commentary:

[The result (of this meditation comments on Ch. 13.13):]

The result is that, through the (las) non-dual union (mnyam-sbyor) of the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of perfect (rdzogs-pa'i) rapture in the maṇḍala of the buddha-body of reality, the emanational maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of spirituality (thugs-rje'i) entirely emerge (yongs-kyis 'byung) without exception in a great spontaneous presence. By the force of that (experience), one becomes the lord who trains ('dul-ba'i mgon-po) the maṇḍalas of (dkyil-'khor) the six world-systems within the ten directions of space (phyogs) and the four times (dus), without exception. One appears in the nature of the six sages and so forth, and by (-yis) the deeds of excellent enlightened activity which liberate (sgrol-ba'i) all the maṇḍalas of (-i dkyil-'khor) sentient beings without exception, who form a magical display (sgyu-ma), one appears to train each according to his or her needs. However, from the very moment of that appearance, one enacts (spyod) and attains the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) where the training that occurs and the beings to be trained resemble a reflection or phantom. That is without (med-pa'i) true inherent existence, either in the sentient beings with individual characteristics who are the object (bya) of liberation, or in one's own emanational bodies which are the subject (byed) of liberation.

Accordingly, it also says in the Magical Net (NGB. Vols. 14-16):

Sentient beings are forms of magical display.
Enlightenment too is like a magical display.
For example, when certain magicians
Cast spells at potsherds and so forth.
If their practical experience is intensified.
Those charmed forms appear to minds which apprehend them
In forms with four-legs and so forth.
Similarly, the mind which has benefited through the
Provisions derived from merit and pristine cognition,
Manifests the unsurpassed enlightenment
Before the minds of sentient beings.

[Synopsis (477.3-477.6)]

[Thirdly, the synopsis (of the actual profound meaning of the nucleus—see p. 999. comments on Ch. 13.14):][1]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This section is the appendix of enlightened activities in five pādas. See above, p. 662.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.14]

In the maṇḍala which is perfect in pristine cognition,
Through union with study, thought, and meditation.
The self-originated (pristine cognition).
Confronting all, is spontaneously present.
This is the supreme commitment
Not to be transgressed by all the Buddhas. [14]

[Tibetan]

ye-shes rdzogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-la /
thos-bsam-sgom-pa'i mnyam-sbyor-gyis /
rang-byung kun-ngam lhun-gyis grub /
'di-ni sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyis /
'da'-bar mi-mdzad dam-tshig mchog / [14]

Commentary:

[Thirdly, the synopsis (of the actual profound meaning of the nucleus—see p. 999. comments on Ch. 13.14):][1]

All things abide in the maṇḍala which is perfect in (rdzogs-pa'i dkyil-'khor-la) primordial buddha-body and pristine cognition (ye-shes). Study (thos) makes one aware of it, thought (bsam) analyses its meaning by means of the mind, and the natural creation stage of skillful means and perfection stage of discriminative awareness are meditation (sgom-pa) directly on it. The result that is genuinely achieved through (-gyis) union (mnyam-sbyor) with (-'i) these, is the self-originated (rang-byung) pristine cognition. It is obtained in a spontaneously present (lhun-gyis grub) manner, along with the enlightened activity which acts, confronting all (kun-ngam), through great spirituality for the sake of those to be trained.

This ('di) excellent (meditation on inner radiance) is revealed as the supreme commitment not to be transgressed ('da'-bar mi-mdzad dam-tshig mchog), the resultant nature in which Buddha-hood is attained through meditation on the creation and perfection stages of the path without duality. It was assumed as an unfailing doctrine by all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyis).

[Superiority of the Natural Great Perfection to Other Teachings (477.6-481.2)]

[The second subdivision (of the detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection—see p. 999) concerns its superiority to other (teachings).]

[It has three sections, of which (the first) concerns the greatness of the individuals who accomplish it. (This comments on Ch. 13..15):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This section is the appendix of enlightened activities in five pādas. See above, p. 662.

Text 13.15 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.15]

One who has aspired towards this
Is deemed by all the maṇḍalas of Buddhas
To be a closest son.
Who would perform the ritual service
Of all maṇḍalas without exception
Throughout space and time, in all their aspects. [15]

[Tibetan]

gang-zhig 'di-la mos-gyur-pa /
sangs-rgyas dkyil-'khor thams-cad-kyis /
phyogs-dus kun-nas thams-cad-du /
dkyil-'khor ma-lus bsnyen-pa-yi /
nye-ba'i sras-su dgongs-par 'gyur / [15]

Commentary:

[Superiority of the Natural Great Perfection to Other Teachings (477.6-481.2)]

[The second subdivision (of the detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection—see p. 999) concerns its superiority to other (teachings).]

[It has three sections, of which (the first) concerns the greatness of the individuals who accomplish it. (This comments on Ch. 13..15):]

The Yogin or one who (gang-zhig) has (gyur-pa) merely aspired towards this ('di-la mos) vehicle is deemed (dgongs-par 'gyur) by all the maṇḍalas of (dkyil-'khor thams-cad) all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas) to be a closest son (nye-ba'i sras-su) in respect of the marvellous secret nature. He is one who would perform the ritual service of (bsnyen-pa-yi) and swiftly obtain in his mind all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) of most secret meaning without exception (ma-lus) throughout (kun-nas) space and time (phyogs-dus), without exception, wherever they reside, and in all their aspects (thams-cad-du). For example, just as a universal monarch may have a thousand sons but hold as his genuine son that one who has the appropriate marks, so those bodhisattvas who maintain (the vehicles of) pious attendants, self-centred buddhas, and causal teachings are not closest sons because it is not within their perceptual range to hear the Secret Nucleus and so forth, which is the natural intention of the Buddhas.[1]

[The second section concerning the greatness of its path or means for attainment has four parts.]

[First among them, it is great because it is the result of all paths. (This comments on Ch. 13.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

As indicated in NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 1. pp. 22-28, Book 2. Pt. 7, pp. 758-764, these other levels of Buddhist teaching are not rejected but integrated within the overall structure from the resultant point of view.

Text 13.16 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.16]

This is the most secret result (gained)

By those who well abide in excellent refinement

Over aeons equal to the number of atoms in the fields.

And by those who perform the ritual service

Of all maṇḍalas without exception. [16]

[Tibetan]

bskal-pa zhing-gi rdul-snyed-du /
shin-tu sbyangs-la rab-gnas-shing /
dkyil-'khor ma-lus bsnyen-pa-yi /
'bras-bu gsang-chen 'di-yin-te / [16]

Commentary:

[The second section concerning the greatness of its path or means for attainment has four parts.]

[First among them, it is great because it is the result of all paths. (This comments on Ch. 13.16):]

This ('di) vehicle of Atiyoga is (yin-te) the most secret result ('bras-bu gsang-chen) which is to be gained by all those who have practised and striven to abide well (rab-gnas-shing) in excellent refinement (shin-tu sbyangs-la) through the diverse causal vehicles over aeons (bskal-pa) of time which are equal to the number of atoms in the (-gi rdul-snyed-du) Buddha-fields (zhing): and by those who perform the ritual service (bsnyen-pa-yi) and attainment of all maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor), outer and inner, without exception (ma-lus), in accordance with the vehicle of the secret mantras. This is because all of them depend upon this path for Buddha-hood.[1]

[The second reveals that it is the track along which all conquerors have passed. (It comments on Ch. 13.17):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Hevajra Tantra. Pt. II, viii, 9-10d, which makes a similar claim.

Text 13.17 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.17]

In the ten directions of the six world-systems.
All maṇḍalas without exception of the conquerors
Of the past, present, and future
Have mastered this (path), and then
Spontaneously perfected the five Buddha-bodies. [17]

[Tibetan]

'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu-na /
'das-dang da-ltar byung-ba-yi /
rgyal-ba'i dkyil-'khor ma-lus-pa /

Commentary:

[The second reveals that it is the track along which all conquerors have passed. (It comments on Ch. 13.17):]

Formerly, in the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu-na), including those which are lateral, upward-facing and downward-facing, all maṇḍalas without exception (dkyil-'khor ma-lus) of the conquerors (rgyal-ba'i) of the past, present and future ('das-dang dat-lar byung-ba-yi) who act on behalf of living beings have mastered this (brnyes) path, and then (nas) spontaneously perfected the five Buddha-bodies (sku-lnga lhun-gyis-rdzogs). This is because all the Buddhas of the three times follow none other than this unique path of progression. Even those who proceed through the causal vehicles must enter into the resultant vehicle because the buddhas emerge from the resultant vehicle. [1]

This is proven by the following passage (Secret Nucleus. Ch. 3.15):

Disillusioned with the four vehicles.
One abides in the result of the single vehicle.

[The third teaches that it is the path of all Yogins. (It comments on Ch. 13.18):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the direct emergence of Buddha-hood through the resultant vehicle, see NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 4. and on the integration of the nine vehicles, *ibid.*, Book 1. Pt. 1, pp. 22-28.

Text 13.18 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.18]

All (Yogins) who have emerged.
And those in the future, in their entirety.
Accomplish spontaneous presence through this (path). [18]

[Tibetan]

byung-dang ma-'ongs thams-cad kun /
'di-yis lhun-gyis 'grub-par 'gyur / [18]

Commentary:

[The third teaches that it is the path of all Yogins. (It comments on Ch. 13.18):]

All (kun) Yogins who have emerged (byung) in the past and in the present, and (dang) all (thams-cad) Yogins or awareness-holders who will emerge in the future (ma-'ongs) in their entirety (kun) accomplish ('grub-par 'gyur) the Buddha-level or the status of an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (lhun-gyis) through this ('di-yis) path. This is because there is no difference in the paths of all the buddhas of the three times.

It also says in the Yogatantras:[1]

Great is the indestructible reality
Of Buddha-body, speech and mind!
The Buddhas who reside in the three times
Through the power of the secret mantras
Of indestructible reality
Possess the peerless and genuine pristine cognition.

[The fourth concerns its superiority over the causal vehicles. (This comments on Ch. 13.19):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.19]

The result, definitive and most secret.
Has been transformed into the path. [19]

[Tibetan]

'di-ni gsang-chen nges-pa-yi /
'bras-bu lam-du gyur-pa yin / [19]

Commentary:

[The fourth concerns its superiority over the causal vehicles. (This comments on Ch. 13.19):]

This ('di-ni) system of Atiyoga or Great Perfection has made into the path (lam-du) the maṇḍala of primordial Buddha-hood, the essence of the result ('bras-bu), in this very lifetime, in accordance with the definitive (nges-pa-yi) esoteric instructions which actualise the most secret (gsang-chen) result that is merely proclaimed in the lower vehicles. Therefore one has actually been transformed (gyur-ba-yin) by this short-cut of the buddhas, which is effortlessly present without having to be extraneously attained.

It says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

Ordinary beings accomplish Buddha-hood.
But do not do so not extraneously.

[The third section (of its superiority over other teachings) teaches that there are no other paths superior to this one. (It comments on Ch. 13.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.20]

For the maṇḍalas of the conquerors, without exception,
Apart from this, there is no secret definitive meaning.
Though sought, none is found by the conquerors. [20]

[Tibetan]

rgyal-ba'i dkyil-'khor ma-lus-la /
'di-las gsang-ba'i nges-don med /
btsal-kyang rgyal-bas mi-brnyes-so / [20]

Commentary:

[The third section (of its superiority over other teachings) teaches that there are no other paths superior to this one. (It comments on Ch. 13.20):]

For (la) all the maṇḍalas of ('i dkyil-'khor) the conquerors (rgyal-ba) of the ten directions and four times, who have passed away in ancient and recent times, and who are currently present, along with their sons, without exception (ma-lus). there is apart from this ('di-las) vehicle of Atiyoga where primordial liberation is spontaneously perfect, no (med) other shortcut of secret definitive meaning (gsang-ba'i nges-don) at all; for there are no other doctrines better than this one. If there were, it is correct that they would be found by the buddhas who seek them. But though sought (btsal-kyang) elsewhere, none (mi) better than this doctrine is ever found (brnyes-so) by the conquerors (rgyal-bas). This means that no such (superior doctrine) is to be found; and it also means that the result of the

secret mantras is here made into the path. It is so-called because when the minds, sense-organs and so forth of living beings obtain the conclusive result of primordial Buddha-hood, the goal is directly reached. There is no (final result) other than that.

It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Like the wish-granting tree and gemstones.
All things abide in the essential causal basis.
In the actual appearance of the container world.
And its mobile (creatures) there is
No inherent existence.
This itself is the great Buddha-body of reality.
Which abides as such through its natural disposition.
Other than it, there is nothing to be obtained.
Once all things have indeed been matured.
There is no progress (anywhere).
This is the essence of the path.

However, one might ask, if (the path) is the result, why should one practice it from the beginning according to the creation and perfection stages and so forth? The result is established to abide as such from the standpoint of the conclusive (path) which is to be traversed, but its essence is obscured by Ignorance. Nonetheless, when the erroneous perception which resembles the (mistaken) apprehension of a conch shell as yellow, has been refined, the ground of one's own original essence is directly reached, and those bewildering suddenly arisen appearances are reversed. Apart from that, there is no extraneous result which newly emerges and was not present before.[1]

It says in the Sūtra of All-Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

Having been sought, it is not obtained.
The supreme result is present
At the time of the cause itself.

[The Worthy Recipients to Whom It Should Be Given (481.2-483.1)]

[The third subdivision (of the detailed exegesis of the meaning of the natural Great Perfection—see p. 999) indicates the worthy recipients to whom this instruction should be given.]

[It has two sections, of which the first, concerning the fortunate recipient to whom it is given, (comments on Ch. 13.21):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. the argument in support of the atemporal result in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4. pp. 131bff.

Text 13.21 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.21]

Among the great seals of all (Buddhas).

This supreme one should be retained by those endowed

With the eyes of discriminative awareness,

Who have well refined it in study, thought, and meditation.

And it should be given to those worthy recipients.

Who are of noble disposition and steadfast.

Who donate their bodies and enjoyments. [21]

[Tibetan]

kun-gyi phyag-rgya chen-po'i mchog /

thos-bsam-bsgom-la rab-sbyangs-pa'i /

shes-rab mig-ldan-rnams-kyis zung /

snod-ldan ngang-tshul bzang-la brtan /

lus-dang longs-spyod gtong-la sbyin / [21]

Commentary:

[It has two sections, of which the first, concerning the fortunate recipient to whom it is given, (comments on Ch. 13.21):]

The secret great seals (phyag-rgya chen-po) of all (kun-gyi) the buddhas are the three inner classes of secret mantras. Among them this natural Tantra of the Secret Nucleus is the superior or wondrously supreme one (mchog). Therefore it should be retained by those (-kyis zung) individuals endowed with the eyes of discriminative awareness (shes-rab mig-ldan-rnams) who have become skilled in the sequence of its words through abundant study (thos), skilled in its genuine abiding nature through discriminative awareness born of thought (bsam) which scrutinises [scrutinises?] the meaning of those (words), and who have (-ba'i) well (rab) refined it (sbyangs) in (la) repeated meditation (bsgom) on that genuine truth. Among those (adepts) too, this doctrine should be entrusted to those worthy recipients (snod-ldan) of the natural Secret Nucleus who are not frightened of its extensive profound meaning, who have renounced evil through the virtuous and noble (bzang) disposition (ngang-tshul) of their aspirations, and who are unchanged by conditions and (la) steadfast (brtan) in faith. It should be given (sbyin) completely to those who (la) can donate (gtong) their own bodies (lus) and (dang) all their enjoyments (longs-spyod) to the Guru and the doctrine.

It says in the Verse Summation of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness (T. 13):

One who does not fear to donate even life itself
For the sake of the doctrine.

And who is without doubt regarding one's own level.
Always resembles Mount Sumeru.

Therefore, the words and meaning (of tantras such as the Secret Nucleus) are given perfectly to one who is noble in spiritual wealth, and similar to (the bodhisattva) Sadaprarudita.[1]

[The second reveals the unfortunate ones to whom it should not be given. (It comments on Ch. 13.22):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On Sadaprarudita, who epitomises the ideal student or recipient of the teachings in the Aṣṭasāhasraprajñāpāramitā, see e. Conze, The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its verse Summary, pp. 277-300.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.22]

It should never be given to others.
If it has been given to those who are deluded
Because they are agitated.
One's life will come to an untimely end.
And then one will be roasted, parched,
And one will remain so for a long time. [22]

[Tibetan]

gzhan-du nam-yang sbyin mi-bya /
rmongs-la 'phyar-bas gal-te byin /
dus min-par-ni srog-zad-nas /
bsregs-dang sbrebs-par yun-ring gnas / [22]

Commentary:

[The second reveals the unfortunate ones to whom it should not be given. (It comments on Ch. 13.22):]

Apart from those worthy recipients to whom it should be given, it should never be given (nam-yang sbyin mi-bya) to others (gzhan-du) who would not understand it even after it had been revealed, and who, even if they did understand, would act erroneously, vacillate in respect of the vows and commitments, have fear and be lethargic or hesitant with respect to the rites of ritual service and attainment, or to the two provisions. This is because (these beings) are afflicted by great defects. If it has been given

(gal-te byin) to (la) those who are deluded (rmongs), who do not know the genuine meaning, and are unfortunate, and to those who commit sin and divulge secrets because (-bas) their body, speech and mind are agitated ('phyar), uncontrolled, and unpacified, one's life will come to an untimely end (dus-min-par-ni srog-zad) owing to the punishment of the Ḍākinīs and oathbound protectors, and then (nas) the duration of one's lifespan will be interrupted (byed!), and in the next life, among the throngs (afflicted) by the unbearable darkness of the hot hells, one will be roasted (bsregs) by the fires of hell, and (dang) parched (sbrebs-par) by the snows and blizzards of the cold hells, and so forth. Then, just holding on to life, one's body will indeed remain so for a long time (yun-ring gnas), tormented by the suffering of affliction, and for twenty thousand aeons and so forth one will have no opportunity for release.

Accordingly it says in the Magical Net of Vairocana (T. 466, NGB. Vol. 19):

Having been slain by weapons, fire, and poison,
And similarly by demons and disease.
And by snakes and cannibal spirits.
One will be born in the great hells.

And in a Sūtra:[1]

One who has accumulated deeds which are adverse to the doctrine is a sentient being who will proceed from the great hells to the great hells.

[Summary of the Chapter (483.1-483.4)]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 13.23):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

N.L.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 13.23]

—Such was the meaningful expression which the Tathāgata himself uttered to the Tathāgata himself. This completes the thirteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled [the Nucleus of] Most Secret Esoteric Instructions. [23]

[Tibetan]

—zhes de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la ched-du
brjod-do / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las shin-tu gsang-
ba man-ngag-gi [snying-po'i] le'u-ste bcu-gsum-pa'o / [23]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 13.23):]

Such was (zhes) the meaningful expression which (ched-du brjod-do) the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) or lord of the maṇḍala. Samantabhadra himself uttered (nyid-kyis) to the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la), including the five enlightened families of self-manifesting array.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the thirteenth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-gsum-pa) from (las) the supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) oral instructions of the Great Perfection, which effects liberation in this very lifetime. It is entitled the Nucleus of (-gi snying-po) the Esoteric Instructions (man-ngag-gi) through which Buddha-hood is obtained in a single lifetime, and which are Most Secret (shin-tu gsang-ba) in comparison to the lower vehicles.

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Then this song of the Great Joyous One was sung to the maṇḍala of all the Tathāgatas themselves. [1]

OM! Perfect in the ten directions and four times.

The maṇḍala of pristine cognition

Is the great seminal point.

The maṇḍala of merits is an assembly of Buddha-body.

Its appearance and emptiness is the seminal point.

Entirely perfect. HOḤ! [2]

OM! The Indestructible great seminal point of merit is:
The indestructible reality endowed with the maṇḍala of pristine cognition;
The indestructible reality, infinite in its great sound;
And the indestructible reality, king or great seminal point. HOḤ! [3]

OM! The great perfection of body, speech, and mind is:
Entirely perfect in enlightened attributes and activities;
The primordially and spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra;
And the great assembly that is gathered—
A great seminal point. HOḤ! [4]

OM! Without reference, the expanse
Of sameness or magical emanation
Entirely emanates as an infinite diversity.
The infinite (pristine cognition) is spontaneously
Absorbed from all directions.
And diverse (attributes emerge)—
The great Buddha-body, speech and mind. HOḤ! [5]

OM! Comprising all the atoms of the worlds within the ten directions,
The purposes of the conquerors, equal to the number of atomic particles,
Through unthinkable emanations, equal to the number of atomic particles,
(Have) spontaneously presence in an instantaneous moment of time.
HOḤ! [6]

OM! All (maṇḍalas) without exception are Buddha-body, speech and mind:
The Great Identity of Buddha-body, speech and mind;
The Buddha-body, speech and mind which pervade all (objects);
And the great seminal point of Buddha-body, speech and mind. HOḤ!
[7]

—Thus did he proclaim. This completes the fourteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Eulogy which Pleases. [8]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.1]

Then this song of the Great Joyous One was sung to the maṇḍala of all the Tathāgatas themselves. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-nyid-kyi dkyil-'khor-la dgyes-pa
chen-po'i glu-'di blangs-so / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (483.4-488.2):]

The third aspect (of the spontaneously present maṇḍala of peaceful deities—see p. 543) is a eulogy to the resultant nature of Buddha-body and pristine cognition. It has three parts, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 14.1):]

Once the maṇḍalas of the creation and perfection stages of the path had been revealed, then (de-nas), in order to praise the spontaneously present maṇḍala of the result, this sons of the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-po'i glu-'di) Samantabhadra, who is the lord of all the Tathāgatas themselves (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad nyid-kyi) and the essence of all the Buddhas of the ten directions and four times, was suns (blangs-so) to the (la) self-manifesting maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of Buddha-body and pristine cognition.

The second part (the exegesis of the meaning of its words) has two subdivisions, namely, a general eulogy to the five Buddha-bodies along with the five pristine cognitions, and a particular eulogy to the male and female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the maṇḍala.

[i. The former has five sections, among which the first is (the eulogy) to the maṇḍala of Buddha-body or the enlightened family of indestructible reality and the (pristine cognition of) reality's expanse. (It comments on Ch. 14.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.2]

OM! Perfect in the ten directions and four times.

The maṇḍala of pristine cognition

Is the great seminal point.

The maṇḍala of merits is an assembly of Buddha-body.

Its appearance and emptiness is the seminal point.

Entirely perfect. HOḤ! [2]

[Tibetan]

OM phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi rdzogs-pa-yi /
ye-shes dkyil-'khor thig-le che /
bsod-nams dkyil-'khor sku-yi tshogs /
snang-stong thig-le kun-du rdzogs HOḤ / [2]

Commentary:

The second part (the exegesis of the meaning of its words) has two subdivisions, namely, a general eulogy to the five Buddha-bodies along with the five pristine cognitions, and a particular eulogy to the male and female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the maṇḍala.

[i. The former has five sections, among which the first is (the eulogy) to the maṇḍala of Buddha-body or the enlightened family of indestructible reality and the (pristine cognition of) reality's expanse. (It comments on Ch. 14.2):]

The syllable OM! begins the song because the five Buddha-bodies are perfected. It indicates that this maṇḍala of Buddha-body is also to illustrate the nature of the five Buddha-bodies and the five pristine cognitions.

Now, there are five aspects to these songs—the singer, the melody, the lyrics, the embellishment, and the blessing of the song. Among these, the melody of the song requires a choir-master who introduces the following melody—the Pañcama tone, followed by the Śaḍja tone, which in turn is followed by the Madhyama tone, that by the Gandharva tone, and that by the melody of the Dhaivata and the Niṣāḍa tones.[1]

The Buddha-body is indeed the natural expression of manifestly perfect (rdzogs-pa-yi) Buddha-hood, indivisible in nature from the Indestructible body of all the Buddhas in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi).[2]

The Buddha-mind of this buddha-body refers to its maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor) self-manifesting pure pristine cognition (ye-shes), mirror-like and so forth in nature and without conceptual elaboration, which is the great (che) pure and indivisible seminal point (thig-le).[3]

The Buddha-body of this Buddha-body refers to its self-manifestation as the maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor) excellent merits (bsod-nams), which appears but is without inherent existence. It is an inconceivable assembly of Buddha-body (sku-yi tshogs) because the nature of the five enlightened families is pervasive without extremes or centre.[4]

The Buddha-speech of this Buddha-body refers to its essence or nature in which appearance and emptiness (snang-stong) are without duality. It is the genuine indescribable and great seminal point (thig-le), entirely perfect (kun-tu rdzogs) in excellent attributes.[5] HOḤ! is exclaimed because joy emerges therefrom.

[The second (eulogy) is on behalf of the primordially pure pristine cognition of discernment in the maṇḍala of Buddha-speech or the

enlightened family of the lotus. (It comments on Ch. 14.3:)] [6]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these tones, which with *Ṛṣabha* form the seven pitches of the octave (*glu-dbyangs-kyi nges-pa bdün*, *Mahāvīyutpatti* 5027-5034), see T. Ellingson, *The Maṇḍala of Sound: Concepts and Sound Structures in Tibetan*, Pt. 1, pp. 161-162; and Savithri Rajan and M. Nixon (eds.), *Shobhillu Saptasvara*, appendix two, where the attributes of these pitches are compared in tabular form. in the case of the present melody, the Intonations occur in the order 5, 1, 4, 3, 6, 7.

[2]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa interprets sections 2-6 in an integrated manner which accords with his unique exegetical approach. The first of them considers the *dharmadhātujñāna* in terms of Buddha-body, and its subdivisions of body, speech and mind. According to *Lo-chen Dharmaśrī*, *gsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*, p. 360, however, this section refers simply to the five Buddha-bodies. Thus, in his view, this first verse refers to the *abhisambodhikāya*.

[3]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., p. 360, associates this verse with the *dharmakāya*.

[4]:

Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., interprets this as the *rūpakāya*, "the maṇḍala of merits" referring to the *sambhogakāya* and the "assembly of buddha-body" referring to the

[5]:

According to *Lo-chen Dharmaśrī*, cit., this verse refers to the *vajrakāya*.

[6]:

Again, in *kLong-chen-pa's* view, section three considers the *pratyayekṣanajñāna* in terms of buddha-speech and its sub-divisions of buddha-body, speech and mind, whereas *Lo-chen Dharmaśrī* interprets it simply in terms of the five kinds of buddha-speech. On these five, see above, pp. 1035-1036.

Text 14.3 (Commentary)

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OM! The Indestructible great seminal point of merit is:
The indestructible reality endowed with the maṇḍala of pristine cognition;
The indestructible reality, infinite in its great sound;
And the indestructible reality, king or great seminal point. HOḤ! [3]

[Tibetan]

OM rdo-rje bsod-nams thig-le che /
rdo-rje ye-shes dkyil-'khor-ldan /
rdo-rje sgra-chen mtha'-yas-pa /
rdo-rje rgyal-po thig-le-che HOḤ / [3]

Commentary:

[The second (eulogy) is on behalf of the primordially pure pristine cognition of discernment in the maṇḍala of Buddha-speech or the enlightened family of the lotus. (It comments on Ch. 14.3):][1]

The syllable OM! is expressed because the five modes of buddha-speech are perfect and spontaneously present. The maṇḍala of Amitābha, representing indestructible (rdo-rje) Buddha-speech, is indeed a great (che) natural and spontaneous seminal point (thig-le che) of merit (bsod-nams) and pristine cognition.

The Buddha-mind of this Buddha-speech refers to its indestructible reality (rdo-rje), which is endowed with the maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor-ldan) the pristine cognition (ye-shes) of discernment and so forth because appearances and emptiness are indivisible.

The Buddha-speech of this Buddha-speech refers to the non-dual indestructible reality (rdo-rje), infinite in its great (chen mtha'-yas-pa) natural sound (sgra) of pristine cognition.

And the Buddha-body of this Buddha-speech refers to the genuine self-manifesting indestructible reality (rdo-rje), i.e. the king (rgyal-po) or great seminal point (thig-le che) in whom appearance and emptiness are indivisible. HOḤ! indicates great amazement.

[The third is a eulogy on behalf of the mirror-like pristine cognition in the maṇḍala of Buddha-mind or the enlightened family of the Buddha (=Tathāgata). (It comments on Ch. 14.4):][2]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Again, in kLong-chen-pa's view, section three considers the pratyayekṣanajñāna in terms of buddha-speech and its sub-divisions of

buddha-body, speech and mind, whereas Lo-chen Dharmaśrī interprets it simply in terms of the five kinds of buddha-speech. On these five, see above, pp. 1035-1036.

[2]:

kLong-chen-pa interprets this section as a commentary on the ādarśajñāna in terms of buddha-mind and its subdivisions of body, speech and mind, whereas in Lo-chen's view it refers to the five pristine cognitions.

Text 14.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.4]

OM! The great perfection of body, speech, and mind is:
Entirely perfect in enlightened attributes and activities;
The primordially and spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra;
And the great assembly that is gathered—
A great seminal point. HOḤ! [4]

[Tibetan]

OM sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rdzogs-pa che /
yon-tan 'phrin-las kun-tu rdzogs /
ye-nas lhun-rdzogs kun-tu bzang /
'dus-pa'i tshogs-chen thig-le-che HOḤ / [4]

Commentary:

[The third is a eulogy on behalf of the mirror-like pristine cognition in the maṇḍala of Buddha-mind or the enlightened family of the Buddha (=Tathāgata). (It comments on Ch. 14.4):][1]

OM! is expressed because the five kinds of Buddha-mind are perfect. Vairocana is the great perfection of the body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kyi rdzogs-pa-che) of all the Buddhas.

The Buddha-mind of this Buddha-mind refers to his nature which is entirely perfect in (kun-tu rdzogs) enlightened attributes and activities (yon-tan 'phrin-las) without exception.

The Buddha-speech of this Buddha-mind refers to the natural disposition of Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang) in whom excellent enlightened attributes abide primordially and spontaneously perfect (ye-nas lhun-rdzogs), without being sought.

And the Buddha-body of this Buddha-mind refers to the great assembly (tshogs-chen) of the maṇḍala of pristine cognition that is gathered ('dus-

pa'i) at this time in a self-manifesting manner. It is a great seminal point (thig-le-che) because it is naturally pure. HOḤ! is exclaimed because (the Buddha-mind) is spontaneously present.

[The fourth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of sameness in the maṇḍala of enlightened attributes or the enlightened family of precious gems. (It comments on Ch. 14.5):][2]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

kLong-chen-pa interprets this section as a commentary on the ādarśajñāna in terms of buddha-mind and its subdivisions of body, speech and mind, whereas in Lo-chen's view it refers to the five pristine cognitions.

[2]:

Again, in kLong-chen-pa's view this section concerns the samatājñāna in terms of enlightened attributes and its subdivisions of body, speech and mind. Lo-chen, however, considers it in terms of the five kinds of enlightened attributes, on which see above, pp. 1037-1038.

Text 14.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.5]

OM! Without reference, the expanse
Of sameness or magical emanation
Entirely emanates as an infinite diversity.
The infinite (pristine cognition) is spontaneously
Absorbed from all directions.
And diverse (attributes emerge)—
The great Buddha-body, speech and mind. HOḤ! [5]

[Tibetan]

OM mi-dmigs sgyu-'phrul mnyam-pa'i dbyings /
mtha'-yas kun-nas sna-tshogs 'phro /
mtha'-yas kun-nas lhun-gyis thim /
sna-tshogs sku-gsung thugs chen-po HOḤ / [5]

Commentary:

[The fourth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of sameness in the maṇḍala of enlightened attributes or the enlightened family of precious gems. (It comments on Ch. 14.5):][1]

OM! is expressed because the five kinds of excellent enlightened attributes are spontaneously present.

The Buddha-body of these enlightened attributes refers to the excellent Buddha-field or expanse of reality without reference (mi-dmigs) in all symbolic terms, to the celestial palace in the expanse of (-'i dbyings) self-manifesting sameness (mnyam-pa), which is the spontaneous Bounteous Array or magical emanation (sgyu-'phrul) of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and also to the infinite (mtha'-yas) maṇḍala of deities entirely (kun-nas) bedecked with ornamental details, which emanates ('phro) as a diversity (sna-tshogs) of light-rays in the ten directions.

The Buddha-speech of these enlightened attributes refers to their symbolic or natural expression, the Infinite (mtha'-yas) pristine cognition which is spontaneously (lhun-gyis) absorbed (thim) from all directions (kun-nas) in the disposition of indivisible sameness.

And the Buddha-mind of these enlightened attributes refers to the possession of the great Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung thugs chen-po). where all the desired diverse (sna-tshogs) treasures of contemplation, miraculous ability, supernormal cognitive power and so forth emerge in the manner of the wish-fulfilling gem. HOḤ! is exclaimed to indicate great astonishment.

[The fifth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of accomplishment in the maṇḍala of enlightened activity or the enlightened family of activity. (It comments on Ch. 14.6):][2]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Again, in kLong-chen-pa's view this section concerns the samatājñāna in terms of enlightened attributes and its subdivisions of body, speech and mind. Lo-chen, however, considers it in terms of the five kinds of enlightened attributes, on which see above, pp. 1037-1038.

[2]:

In kLong-chen-pa's view, this section refers to the kṛtyupasthānajñāna in terms of enlightened activities and their subdivisions of body, speech and mind. Lo-chen, on the other hand, sees it as a commentary on the five kinds of enlightened activity, on which see above, pp. 1038-1039.

Text 14.6 (Commentary)

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OM! Comprising all the atoms of the worlds within the ten directions,
The purposes of the conquerors, equal to the number of atomic particles,
Through unthinkable emanations, equal to the number of atomic particles,
(Have) spontaneously presence in an instantaneous moment of time.
HOḤ! [6]

[Tibetan]

OM phyogs-bcu'i 'jig-rten rdul-snyed-du /
rgyal-ba'i don-rnams rdul-phran-snyed /
sprul-pa rdul-phran bsam-yas-kyis /
skad-cig yud-la lhun-gyis grub HOḤ / [6]

Commentary:

[The fifth is a eulogy on behalf of the pristine cognition of accomplishment in the maṇḍala of enlightened activity or the enlightened family of activity. (It comments on Ch. 14.6):][1]

The syllable OM! is expressed because the five kinds of enlightened activity are spontaneously present. The excellent field of those to be trained is one comprising (du) all the atoms of (rdul-snyen) container-worlds ('jig-rten) or fields and their sentient contents within the ten directions (phyogs-bcu'i) of the six world-systems.

The Buddha-body of this enlightened activity refers to the purposes of the conquerors (rgyal-ba'i don-rnams) which demonstrate four kinds of enlightened activity, equal to the number of atomic particles (rdul-phran snyed) in those worlds. Such deeds are in fact their own essence.

The Buddha-speech of this enlightened activity refers to the diffusion of emanations by whom (these actions) are demonstrated, i.e. instruction through unthinkable (bsam-yas-kyis) emanations (sprul-pa) who instruct each according to his or her needs, and who are also equal to the number of atomic particles (rdul-snyen).

The Buddha-mind of this enlightened activity refers to the effortless spontaneous presence (lhun-gyis grub) for the sake of living creatures through which these emanations grant instruction, pervading their fields in an instantaneous moment of time (skad-cig yud-la). This is accomplished without wavering from the Buddha-body of reality. HOḤ! is exclaimed because this (enlightened activity) is amazing.

[The second subdivision (see p. 1056) is a particular eulogy to the male and female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the maṇḍala. (It comments on Ch. 14.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

In kLong-chen-pa's view, this section refers to the kṛtyupasthānajñāna in terms of enlightened activities and their subdivisions of body, speech and mind. Lo-chen, on the other hand, sees it as a commentary on the five kinds of enlightened activity, on which see above, pp. 1038-1039.

Text 14.7 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.7]

OM! All (maṇḍalas) without exception are Buddha-body, speech and mind:

The Great Identity of Buddha-body, speech and mind;

The Buddha-body, speech and mind which pervade all (objects);

And the great seminal point of Buddha-body, speech and mind. HOḤ!

[7]

[Tibetan]

OM thams-cad ma-lus sku-gsung-thugs /

sku-gsung-thugs-kyi bdag-nyid-che /

sku-gsung-thugs-kyis kun-tu khyab /

sku-gsung-thugs-kyi thig-le che HOḤ / [7]

Commentary:

[The second subdivision (see p. 1056) is a particular eulogy to the male and female consorts who are the mighty lord and lady of the maṇḍala. (It comments on Ch. 14.7):]

The syllable OM! is expressed because Buddha-body and pristine cognition are spontaneously perfect. All (thams-cad) maṇḍalas of the five enlightened families, without exception (ma-lus), which manifest in and of themselves throughout the ten directions and four times, are naturally the Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs), the inexhaustible wheels of adornment.

Samantabhadra is the Great Identity (bdag-nyid chen-po) or active male subject of Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kyi). Samantabhadri is the female passive object of Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs-kyis) which pervade all (kun-tu khyab) objects; and those two male and female consorts without duality are naturally the reality in which all saṃsāra and nirvana attain Buddha-hood primordially as the essence of Buddha-body, speech, and mind (sku-gsung-thugs).[1]

These male and female consorts—Samantabhadra of the ground, path and result—are naturally unchanging throughout the three times because

they are enlightened in that expanse of the great seminal point (thig-le-che). HOḤ! is exclaimed in the Great Joyous One's sone because he is spontaneously present as the original lord of all buddhas and sentient beings.

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 14.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the terms kun-tu bzang-po byed-pa-po and kun-tu bzang-mo bya-ba-mo. see also Ch. 1, pp. 401-403, Ch. 2, note 1, and Ch. 6, pp. 645-649.

Text 14.8 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 14.8]

—Thus did he proclaim. This completes the fourteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled the Eulogy which Pleases. [8]

[Tibetan]

—zhes ched-du bsgrags-so / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na nyid nges-pa-las mnyes-pa'i [bstod-pa'i] le'u-ste bcu-bzhi-pa'o / [8]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 14.8):]

Thus (-zhes) did he purposefully proclaim (bsgrags-so), unprompted, to the retinue of the pure and self-manifesting field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array.

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the fourteenth chapter (le'u ste bcu-bzhi-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of the result Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) Buddha-body and pristine cognition, entitled The Eulogy (bstod-pa) according with the abiding nature Which naturally and spontaneously Pleases (mnyes-pa'i) the maṇḍala and the great mighty lord of the maṇḍala.

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Then the identity of all the Tathāgatas, the essential nature of all the Buddhas, manifested as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities.[1] For what, one

might ask, is this revealed? [2] Through conceptions which are deluded with respect to selfhood and manifest attachment to the imaginary, beings are separated from the genuine path. Without understanding the hidden secrets, one becomes manifestly attached to the concealed secrets, and then one is deluded with respect to causes and results. in consequence, [3] one is cast down by the harsh seeds of existence, and then one is born in the hottest of hells, which is unceasing. One is afflicted there by the excruciating sufferings of Intense heat, and at the very moment when one thinks, "Would that I might experience intense cold rather than this?", one is thoroughly numbed and utterly afflicted by severe pains which split (one's body) in the manner of a lotus flower. Such sufferings endured in the eight (hells) beginning with the hottest, and in the eight (hells) beginning with the coldest are connected with the world-systems and are experienced for twelve thousand great aeons. [4] Then that process of maturation comes to an end and one suffers pangs of hunger and thirst among the tormented spirits. Desirable objects become unpleasant, turn into diverse objects—poisonous and harsh, and they even become non-existent. Utterly emaciated and dry, one is born for six great aeons with body, limbs, and sense-organs which are unsatisfactory. [5]

Then, when that process of maturation of the coarse obscurations of past deeds has gradually diminished, and one is united with one's previous existence, as a tormented spirit, one becomes a great ogre who is most venomous and fierce. Such beings have one body with a hundred heads, and with diverse kinds of heads, or they have a hundred bodies with a single head. They have diverse kinds of bodies, with many limbs and diverse kinds of limbs. They bear diverse kinds of harmful hand-implements, and they have a multitude of retainers. They have diverse terrifying forms, and they bellow diverse kinds of terrifying roar. Their forms and roars, stench and bad breath cause all beings to panic in fear. With black vital energy, which is utterly terrifying, and with breath which is cold and hot they disturb the (chilio)cosmos throughout the ten directions. They inflict four hundred and four kinds of disease: and they cause insanity and debility. Through these powers, they subjugate the Nāga domains, the realms of the antigods, the god-realms, and those of Brahmakāyika, Abhāsvara, Subhakṛtṣṇa [Subhakṛtsna?], and Bṛhatphala downwards. [6]

Owing to the service which (Rudra), the (archetype of such beings), had performed in the past, the omniscient (Heruka) observed and then disciplined him through spirituality. [7]

In order that the Tathāgata, the Magical Net which is an indestructible array of greatness, might display the charisma of great pride which disciplines the lord of the three levels of existence within the ten directions of the six world-systems, this identity of the indestructible body, speech, and mind of all the Tathāgatas, the Transcendent Lord and Great Joyous One, became absorbed in the kingly contemplation of the Magical Net, which emanates as the great cloud of the maṇḍala of kingly wrathful deities. [8]

From the expanse of the reel, the great Krodhīśvari emerged. With exclamation of "Hi, Hi!", and with a lustrous glow which is joyous, the

jewel (penis) and the lotus (vagina) swelled, and then penetration occurred through the joy of their non-dual embrace. [9] From the cloud of their "enlightened mind" (= seminal fluids), there emerged (the mantra): HŪM HŪM HŪM VIŚVA KRODHA JVALA MAṆḌALA PHAṬ PHAṬ PHAṬ HALA HALA HALA HŪM. [10]

At these words, pervading the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems, the assemblies of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities came forth, as large as the trichiliocosm and equal in number to the atomic particles of the ten directions, [11] and thus all the ten directions of the six world-systems were rocked, further rocked, and absolutely rocked. Sounds were bellowed, further bellowed, and absolutely bellowed. (Instruments) were rattled, further rattled, and absolutely rattled. (Objects) were destroyed, further destroyed, and absolutely destroyed. (Waves) were dispersed, further dispersed, and absolutely dispersed. Among those who abide in all the chiliocosms of the ten directions of the six world-systems, they conquered, further conquered and absolutely conquered those who were most powerful and most resplendent, Maheśvara who was great in strength, and all such beings. [12]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One himself, became transformed in all respects into the dark brown Buddha-body of the Blood-Drinker, very terrifying, most awesome, in a great blaze (of light) which causes panic, with heads, arms, and legs equal in number to the atomic particles of the chiliocosm, holding diverse weapons; and he then turned into a form with three heads, six arms, and four legs. Rejoicing in a great charnel ground, in the midst of an ocean of blood, upon a mountain of human bones, and at the centre of a spacious circle which greatly blazes forth, he stood with (left legs) extending and (right legs) drawn in, upon a seat which comprised Maheśvara and the most proud mistress of the charnel ground, husband and wife. [13]

As for that cloud-mass of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities: there were some associated with the great glorious Blood-Drinker who stands in the eastern direction, there were some associated with the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker who stands in the southern direction, there were some associated with the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker who stands in the western direction, and there were some associated with the great glorious and universal Karma Blood-Drinker who stands in the northern direction. All of these were endowed with a very terrifying guise, an awesome roar, and a blazing aura, with three heads, six arms, and four legs. They stood with (legs) extended and drawn in, upon seats which comprise husband and wife couples of Gandharvas, Yaksas, Ogres, Yama-spirits, and other such beings. The host of the great Blood-Drinker queens also stood, embracing their respective Buddha-bodies. [14]

[These Herukas of the five enlightened families were absorbed and subsumed together, and then as one (they performed) the wondrous act of granting many instructions]. [15]

Then the Great Proud Spirit and other such beings, in their ferocious temper, revealed great miraculous abilities, diverse and malignant, and with one voice and a malignant roar they emitted fierce wrathful words,

with an unpleasant exhalation of breath. Saying, "Release us! Why do you act so, O lord of compassion!", they were angered and enraged in their most venomous temper. [16]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, assumed a form with nine heads, eighteen arms, and eight legs, and then with an awesome voice he grew exceedingly wrathful in accordance with the skillful means which instructs through spirituality. Uttering, "HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ HA HA HA KHĀHI KHĀHI KHĀHI!", [17] he discarded the hearts and all sense-organs of the hosts of great venomous spirits such as Maheśvara, he extracted their entrails, cut off their limbs, ate all their flesh, drank all their blood, and wore all their bones. [18] Then, uttering these words: HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ BHYOḤ E ĀRALI HRĪṢ HRĪṢ JAḤ JAḤ, the world-systems of the ten directions along with space were absorbed within an area the size of a single mustard seed. [19]

Then they gathered the highest queens among the queens of all female elementals, who are the wives of the highest kings, including the Great Proud Spirit, among the kings of all the male elementals. These are namely Mahārākṣasī Manurākṣasī, Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Indrāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī [Nārāyaṇī], Kaumārī, Piṅgalā, Amṛtā [Sūryā], Saumī [Śāntī], Daṇḍī, Rākṣasī, Bhakṣasī, Ratī, Rudhiramadī, Ekacārīṇī, Manohārikā, Siddhikarī, Vāyudevī, Mahāmāraṇā, Agnāyī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Bhujanā, Varuṇāṇī, Yellow-red Mahāchāgalā, Dark-blue Mahākumbhakarṇī, Dark-yellow Lambodarā, and so forth, along with their slaves and slaves of slaves, and their servants and servants of servants, equal in number to the atoms of their surrounding fields. [20]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, the great glorious Blood-Drinker, again manifested the very terrifying forms of the five enlightened families through the skillful means which grants instruction, and then all of them through their Joyousness became absorbed in the contemplation called "the emergence of the cloud-like maṇḍala of display". [21] This following (mantra) emerged from their indestructible body, speech and mind: OṢ AḤ HŪṢ VAJRA PRAVEŚAYA ALALAH. [22]

So saying, the queens of the elemental spirits were excited with extreme desire. They contracted and expanded the lotus maṇḍalas (of their vaginas), and then. Just as iron unites with a magnet, the great ogress Manurākṣasī, Piṅgalā, Ratī, Mahāmāraṇā, Mahākālī, Yellow-red Mahāchāgalā, Dark-blue Mahākumbhakarṇī, and Dark-yellow Lambodarā embraced the body of the transcendent lord, or Great Joyous One, the great glorious Vajra Blood-Drinker. Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Indrāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Kaumārī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Tathāgata (=Buddha) Blood-Drinker. Amṛtā, Śāntī, Daṇḍī, Bhakṣasī, and Rākṣasī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker. Rudhiramadī, Ekacārīṇī, Manohārikā, Siddhikarī, and Vāyudevī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker. And Agnāyī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Bhujanā, and Varuṇāṇī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious and universal Karma Blood-drinker. [23]

Then these maṇḍalas of wrathful deities, transcendent lords and great

joyous ones, uttered the syllable HŪṂ, whereby the assembled lotus-
maṇḍalas (of those queens) tightened, and they closely embraced. [24]

Then with Joy, they uttered (the syllable) HA, so that from the cloud of
their "enlightened mind" (seminal fluids) there came forth the host of
Gaurī, the host of Caurī, the host of Pramohā, the host of Vetālī, the host
of Pukkāsī, the host of Caṇḍālī, the host of Ghasmarī, and the host of
Śmaśānī, each with their respective hand-implements and wonder. And
having come forth, these assumed their terrifying forms with their
respective hand-implements in a circle, starting from the eastern direction,
at the radial points of the (maṇḍala) circle of the great blazing (Herukas).
[25]

Then with extreme joy they uttered the syllable HE, so that there came
forth the host of great Siṃhamukhī, the host of great Vyāghramukhī, the
host of great Śṛgālamukhī, the host of great Śvāṇamukhī, the host of great
Gṛdhramukhī, the host of great Kaṅkamukhī, the host of great Kākamukhī,
and the host of great Ulūkamukhī, each with their respective hand-
implements and wondrous guise. And having come forth, they assumed
their positions with an awesome glare in a circle from the eastern
direction, outside the circle of the great blazing ones. [26]

Then with extreme joy they filled all the fields of the ten directions
without exception, and uttered the syllable PHAṬ, so that there came forth
the host of Vajratejasī, the host of Vajrāmoghā [/ Vajramukhī], the host of
Vajralokā, and the host of Vajravetālī, with their respective hand-
implements and wonder. And having come forth, these took their position
with an extremely awesome form at the gates of the blazing maṇḍala. [27]

Then, derived from that cloud of joy, they chanted the syllable PHAṬ
throughout the ten directions so that they all grew wrathful, and all the
Mātarīs then again were instantaneously dispatched to their particular and
respective abodes. [28]

Then all these transcendent lords, great joyous ones, or great glorious
Blood Drinkers became absorbed in the contemplation called "the
emergence of nectar through great spirituality"; and then these following
(mantras) emerged from their indestructible body, speech and mind: OM
VAJRA MAHĀMṚTA MAHĀKRODHA AM AM AM. [29]

So saying, all the Maheśvara spirits and so forth were expelled from the
bowels of these transcendent lords or great wrathful deities. They were
immersed in an ocean of unclean mire, and then Ucchuśmakrodha
emerged from the bowels, and, drinking all the mire, caused them to
regain mindfulness. [30] Then, all these hosts of the maṇḍala of wrathful
deities were indeed seen to be present in an expanse of great blazing
Buddha-body, with nine hundred heads, one thousand eight-hundred arms,
and eight hundred legs. [31]

At this time, the skillful means which train all the proud Maheśvaras in
all the existences of the ten directions of the six world systems manifested
diversely and were inconceivably different. But their subjugation occurred
simultaneously. [32]

Then these (spirits) trembled greatly, and in fear, with a most lamentable howl they swore an oath that they would become subjects, saying, "Let me be your subject. Let me be your subject. If I do not remain an earnest subject, tear my heads and body in a hundred pieces. Break my heart too and cut it up. Burn my putrid decomposing (body) and cast it away. And let me fall into hell. I beseech you!" Then they took up their positions as the seats of the maṇḍala. [33]

They all said yet again with one voice:

Please accept our wives.
Mothers, sisters, and daughters
Within the great maṇḍala.
Please accept them, heroic lord of Gods.
Let all our respective retinues
Maintain only the name
Of this great assembled maṇḍala—
Indeed, as our blazing crown jewels,
May we adopt you with an attitude
Which is without deceit but respectful.
And then remainins on our crowns.
Let us venerate you.
Let us perfectly accomplish without exception
Whatever may be the purpose of those (in the maṇḍala). [34]

And they said:

If here in the presence of these heroic ones
We do not do as we have said.
May our heads, bodies and hearts
Be broken, cut, and decompose in pieces. [35]

Then the host of their wives, and all the hosts of their mothers, sisters and daughters instantly arrived in the maṇḍala, and they all spoke as follows with one voice:

May all the hosts of our retinues in their entirety
Become the subjects of the great heroic ones.
May the treat heroic ones grant (injunctions) to us
Concerning the accomplishment of their rites.

Thus they spoke. [36]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, presented the vajra into their hands and conferred the name empowerment. Then they were arrayed in the outermost (area) of the maṇḍala. [37]

This completes the fifteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Cloud-like Emanation of the Natural Maṇḍala of the Wrathful Deities. [38]

Commentary 1-2: Teachings on the Wrathful Deities

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[Commentary (488.2-534.4):]

The second part of the second section (of this text—i.e. indicating how both the peaceful and wrathful deities emanate from the natural maṇḍala of the ground—see pp. 331; 543) is an exegesis of the maṇḍala in which the wrathful deities emerge (Chs. 15-21). It has three parts, namely; a teaching on the appearance of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities which is the nature of the spontaneously present ground (Ch. 15); an extensive exegesis of the branches of its means for attainment in accordance with the path (Chs. 16-20); and a description of the eulogy to the resultant Buddha-body and pristine cognition (Ch. 21).

The first of these three parts (forms the subject matter of this chapter). It Includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview (488.3-503.3)]

The overview has three subdivisions, namely, a general teaching on the wrathful deities who are spontaneously present in the ground, a detailed exegesis of the wrathful deities who emanate therefrom, and a recognition of the significance of this chapter.

1. General Teaching on the Wrathful Deities

The term "wrathful deity" (Tibetan khro-bo), derived from (the Sanskrit) krodha, refers to those (deities) who are triumphant over disharmonious aspects and who act on behalf of living beings through the wrathful enlightened activity of anger. When classified, they are of three types: There is the Buddha-body of

reality free from extremes of conceptual elaboration, so-called because the wrathful counterpart of the reality of the peaceful deities is without object or sign; there is derived from that disposition the genuine abiding; nature of perfect rapture which appears as the maṇḍala of Herukas in Akaniṣṭha;[1] and there is their spontaneous spirituality, i.e. the essence of the emanational body and nature of enlightened deeds or activities, which manifests as wrathful deities to train each according to his or her needs.

It says in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835):

Obeisance to the one who is wrathful
Through the disposition of sameness;
Obeisance to the one who performs
Acts of perfect rapture through wrath;
Obeisance to the one who absorbs and emanates
The indestructible reality.

Now the wrathful deities are also disclosed through their four attributes, namely: reality, pristine cognition, deeds, and enlightened

activity.

The reality free from conceptual elaboration is dispositionally wrathful because it does not abide in the symbolic, as is said in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The great genuine discriminative awareness
Is supreme among wrathful deities
Because it subdues the symbolic.

As to the second, the extensive pristine cognition is dispositionally wrathful with respect to the objects of renunciation because it does not abide in ignorance and error, as is said in the Extensive Magical Net (T. 834):

Through kingly Intrinsic awareness or pristine cognition,
All ten directions are overwhelmed,
And then all things indeed are absorbed
In the non-referential expanse.

As to the third, when living beings are protected through spirituality, (deeds) are Implicitly wrathful because disharmonious aspects are subdued without effort.

It says in the Tantra of the Deity (lha-rgyud):

Without subjective thoughts.
Spirituality is wrathful
In its attraction and desire.

As for the fourth, (enlightened activities) are ostensibly enacted in wrathful forms in accordance with (the acumen of) those to be trained.

It says in the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions (T. 829):

The peaceful deities will not benefit
Those who are most venomous and fierce.
All the Tathāgatas therefore act in wrathful forms.
Derived from their seals of discriminative awareness and skillful means.

Why, you may ask, do living creatures fall into the two categories of the venomous and those who are peaceful, passionate, and so forth? This depends on the greater or lesser degree to which the energy of the wrathful and peaceful maṇḍalas is spontaneously present in the crown- and heart-centres (of the body) respectively.[2]

Indeed, when one is bewildered in saṃsāra through the egotistical grasping of ignorance, the glow of the wrathful deities appears intractable and fierce through those deeds which manifest hatred along with its two concomitants, pride and envy. Consequently, this becomes the basis for external harmful (actions).

Through desire, on the other hand, the glow of the peaceful deities

increases, and one is overwhelmed by delight and attachment. Delusion, meanwhile, abides as the essence of these two (conflicting emotions).

It says in the Tantra of the Display of Pristine Cognition (ye-shes rol-pa'i rgyud):

The Buddhas present in the ground
Are naturally expressed as the peaceful and wrathful deities.
Derived therefrom, the three poisons of ignorance
Have a corresponding causal basis.
Whereby the sense faculties may appear
To be either peaceful or wrathful.

It is indeed in order to train those (conflicting emotions) that both peaceful and wrathful deities spontaneously emerge.

As the same text says:

In order to train them, the two maṇḍalas
Appear as peaceful and wrathful deities
In all directions and times.
And become spontaneously present
In an Instantaneous moment.

Those (wrathful deities) are also present in the ground, path and result.
[3] The wrathful deities who are primordial pure in the ground comprise the maṇḍalas of Blood-Drinkers who abide spontaneously in the crown-centres of all sentient beings and of all Buddhas.

As quoted above (p. 404):

In the dark-brown palace of the skull which blazes forth.
The portals are constructed with the mighty king of Māras,
And rivetted with awesome wrathful deities.

And in the Subtle Array of Gemstones (NGB. Vol. 9):

Within the respective heads (of sentient beings).
There abide the bodies of the wrathful deities.

Those wrathful deities through whom the path is actually attained are visually created and meditated on within their maṇḍalas.

It says in the Secret Tantra (gsang-rgyud):

One should meditate well on the maṇḍala
Of wrathful deities, according to the path,
Who form a great blazing assembly.

Those wrathful deities who are spontaneously present in the result appear as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities in the selfmanifesting spontaneous Bounteous Array, where defilements are purified in the expanse.

The same text says:

The wrathful deities of the expanse of the real.
In accordance with the result.
Radiate as the self-manifesting spontaneous
Bounteous Array of the three Buddha-bodies.

Now, if those wrathful deities were non-existent in the ground, it would be incorrect, according to the way of the unsurpassed vehicle, for them to be attained during the path. Many such flaws would occur. For example, most of the maṇḍalas which are reputedly attained in the body according to the new and ancient traditions would not accord with the truth. Even after being propitiated they would not be accomplished: and it would be incorrect for emanations to emerge from them because there would be no emanational basis. It is, on the other hand, revealed that the wrathful deities present in the ground are actualised by buddhas, not actualised by sentient beings, and subsequently refined by those on the path.[4]

2. Detailed Exegesis of the Wrathful Deities

As for the detailed exegesis of the wrathful deities who emanate therefrom: One should know that the extensive explanation given here accords with the present tantra which teaches that the Transcendent Lord Heruka tamed all the mundane wrathful (deities) without exception and then arrayed them on their seats and in the surrounding rows of the maṇḍala. The (preliminary) account of the actual taming of Rudra through the emanations of spirituality, however, is found in the Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions.[5] Twelve-thousand and six great aeons ago, during the aeon known as Universal Array, the teaching of Akṣobhya Buddha emerged in the Buddha-field of Abhirati.[6] At that time, there was one monk, Thub-bka' gZhon-nu by name, who turned the doctrinal wheel of the unsurpassed (vehicle). Among his attendants there was a householder Kaukala (Ke'ukaya) who had a son named Thar-pa Nag-po, and his servant was called gDan-phag. At that time, Thar-pa Nag-po and his servant approached the monk Thub-bka' gZhon-nu and made the following request, "Great monk! is it certain, as we have heard, that the path of liberation exists for one who has freely enjoyed all things?" The monk said that that was indeed the case.

Then Thar-pa Nag-po and his servant asked, "What is the path which has regard for all things, and in which desire is present after one has become a renunciate?"

In response, he said:

If that real nature is not contrived,
Even the practice of the four shocking things⁷
Resembles clouds in the sky.
This is the path of genuine Yoga.

The pair went off rejoicing, and among them, Thar-pa, who was not learned in skillful means and who had feeble intelligence contrived to acquire a holy body by literally practising the four shocking things at will,

and yet his mind entered on the paths of evil existences. gDan-phag who was of keen intelligence and learned in skillful means practised according to the meaning.[7] Although he was debased in body and a servant, his mind entered upon the genuine path. But since those two had dissimilar views and conduct. they disputed among themselves, and then asked the monk. who said. "gDan-phag is definitive with respect to the view." Thereupon, Thar-pa, in anger, exclaimed, "They are two of a kind!". In his imbalanced state, he thought that he alone was being reproached, and then he rebuked both his servant and the monk, and expelled them far (from the land).

Then Thar-pa literally practised the secret teachings of the buddhas, and became perverse. Adopting a perverse ascetic discipline, he ate the human corpses of the charnel grounds, he wore human skins, he walked with the black jackals of the charnel grounds and the wild dogs, and he associated with ogres. He Blew birds of prey, and he befriended Brahmany kites, carnivorous wild boar, and other base creatures; and he deprived all beings of their lives. He cohabited with many gatherings of whores and lived while indulging his great desire. in consequence of this, after his death, he proceeded into limitless evil existences, and finally became known as Rudra Thar-pa Nag-po. Holding sway over the form realms downwards and trusting in flesh and flood, he became a harmful obstructor to a host of living beings.[8]

On that occasion Rudra was not subdued by forms such as glorious Hayagrīva.[9] Instead, Guhyapati (Vajrapāṇi) materialised as the Great Glorious One (Mahāśrī Heruka), and made him obedient and amenable for the first time by entering into his body and stretching out. Tormented underfoot, with great distress and contrition, Rudra confessed his previous evil deeds. Then, along with his spouse, he was accepted as a servant and tamed.[10]

There were also Māra, Yama and other such (demons) who belonged to species which could not have been tamed by any means other than sorcery (abhicāra). For their sake, Śrī Heruka again emanated in his fearful Buddha-body, speech and mind, and then eradicated and disciplined them.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This is the maṇḍala described in the present chapter. On the position of these deities in the crown-centre, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 1103-404, and below, pp. 1078ff.

[2]:

Cf, above. Ch. 1. pp. 403-404.

[3]:

Just as the peaceful deities appear according to ground, path and result, so these wrathful deities of ground, path and result are respectively the subject of Ch. 15, Chs. 1620, and Ch. 21.

[4]:

As explained above, this atemporal presence of the ground is elaborated in both the causal and resultant vehicles. See NSTB, Book 1. Pts. 3-4.

[5]:

mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa, Chs. 22-31, 147.5.1. ff. The Transcendent Lord Heruka (bcom-ldan-'das he-ru-ka) or Che-mchog He-ru-ka is Samantabhadra in wrathful form.

[6]:

Cf. the account in Yeshe Tsogyal, The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava, Pt. I, pp. 26-47 where Rudra is subdued by Hayagrīva and Vajravarāhī. Thub-bka' gZhon-nu is regarded as an emanational form of Vajrasattva. On Abhirati, the Buddha-field of the eastern direction, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 364.

[7]:

Just as Thar-pa is said to have become Rudra through his misapplication of the sbyor-sgrol practices, so gDan-phag through his genuine progress became Vajrapāṇi

[8]:

i.e. as Rudra, Thar-pa became a lord of rūpadhātu and kāmadhātu.

[9]:

This version derived from the mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa differs from that of Ye-she Tsogyal, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*. Pt. 1, pp. 41-46, where the task of taming Rudra is assigned to Hayagrīva.

[10]:

The subjugation of Rudra is here assigned to Vajrapāṇi because, as gDan-phag, he had formerly made a spiritual connection with Thar-pa.

Commentary 3.1: The Recognition of the Maṇḍala

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[As for the recognition of the significance of this chapter: It has three sections, namely, the recognition of the maṇḍala, the recognition of Rudra, and the recognition of (appropriate) times and teachers.]

The first section has two aspects of which the former sets forth the following argument: The maṇḍala of the wrathful deities in this chapter must be either natural or emanational.[1] in the former case, it would contradict the explanation that the maṇḍala is emanated for the sake of those to be trained; and in the latter case it would contradict the explanation, according to this chapter which is entitled *The Natural Mandala of Wrathful Deities*, that they are self-manifesting in Akaniṣṭha.

The latter is a clear exegesis in response to that (argument): Samantabhadra abides primordially as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities, and it is from his self-manifesting nature that these (deities) accordingly appear. This is proven by the use of the very term "natural maṇḍala". The emanational display (of this maṇḍala) should be known as the basis through which it apparitionally arises in the perception of those to be trained. Described as such, the explanation is consistent.

It is not that there are persons with independent characteristics to be trained by a maṇḍala of emanations which also has independent characteristics. Rather, this emanation is like a magic show or spectacle.

Although (this explanation) is consistent from the standpoint of the teacher (Samantabhadra), in the minds of sentient beings these (malignant) species such as (Rudra) are illustratively trained in the above

manner; just as before an artefact is created, an illustration of it is designed.

Now, when that natural maṇḍala manifests in and of itself from the expanse, there is a self-manifesting display of pristine cognition which appears. It abides in the crown-centre as the maṇḍala of Blood-Drinkers, and through its energy these (emanations) are spontaneously manifested of their own accord. They thence appear as such in the world-systems of those to be trained, just as the moon in space appears (reflected) in a vessel of water.

This movement from the self-manifestation of the peaceful and wrathful deities to one of extraneous appearance resembles that of the (Buddha-body of) perfect rapture from which the emanational body appears, in the manner of the moon reflected in water.

As is said in the Ornament of the Sutras of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4020):[2]

These respectively resemble the forms
Of the moon in water and in the sky.

This passage indicates that in the sky of the Buddha-body of reality, there is the moon of the Buddha-body of perfect rapture which appears as the (reflected) emanational body within the water of those to be trained.

Nor is it the case that the aforementioned natural expression of the peaceful deities subsequently turns into that of the wrathful deities. They (both) abide primordially and spontaneously, and are not differentiated in a temporal sense. But when the meaningful expanse which abides as such is set forth in texts of expressive words these (peaceful and wrathful maṇḍalas) cannot be revealed simultaneously. This is why they are taught successively and the term "emanational" is used.[3]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan rang-bzhin yin-nam sprul-pa yin. The former is the self-manifest sambhogakāya in wrathful form, and the latter is the extraneously manifest nirmāṇakāya.

[2]:

Cf. the explanation in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 95b-106b, including a similar quotation from kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's shing-rta chen-mo.

[3]:

Cf., Ch. 4, pp. 581, 592, where the final syllable AU is said to represent the "glow of the peaceful deities which appears as the wrathful deities" because both peaceful and wrathful maṇḍalas are equally represented by the jarland of syllables.

Commentary 3.2: The Recognition of Rudra

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[As for the recognition of the significance of this chapter: It has three sections, namely, the recognition of the maṇḍala, the recognition of Rudra, and the recognition of (appropriate) times and teachers.]

The second, concerning the recognition of Rudra, has two aspects. Among them the former sets forth the following argument:

Rudra who has been described here, must either be an ordinary being or an emanation. in the former case, since he is said to be a great tormented spirit or ogre, that would be inconsistent with him holding sway over the form-realm because such (ordinary spirits and ogres) belong to the desire-realm, and have not obtained contemplation in the meditative concentrations.[1] It would also be inconsistent for him to perceive the visage of the Great Glorious One and become an actual disciple because the Great Glorious One and he would not experience the same perceptual range. in the latter case, it would be inappropriate for him (as an emanation) to experience the sufferings of the three evil existences.

The second aspect is the response to that argument, which has two parts: Among them, the response to the first proposition is that, although Rudra does belong to the realm of desire, there is no contradiction in him holding sway over the form realm; for one who obtains the sublime levels in a form belonging to the desire realm does hold sway over the form realms, and he in fact did so because the force of his past deeds was inconceivable. Nor is it found that one who is described as a great tormented spirit of the desire realm cannot obtain the contemplations. It is not contradictory even for one whose supporting form belongs to the desire realm to obtain the contemplations of form, just as it is said that an ordinary person of the desire realm might obtain the mind of formless concentration, and dust as there are sublime beings within the desire realm.[2] The expression "great tormented spirit or ogre" in fact indicates that he is great in contemplation and miraculous ability.

Again, it is most implicit that Rudra must have experienced a perceptual range equal in fortune to that of the Great Glorious One, in order to perceive the visage of the Great Glorious One. Indeed, the defect (in the first argument) cannot be rejected because it is also implicit that sentient beings who perceive the six sages experience the same perceptual range as the sages, and that when one perceives gods, humans, animals, material objects and so forth one does experience the same perceptual range as they do.

Therefore, the Rudra who is depicted here along with his retinue appears to be an ordinary being, but is indeed extraordinary. Just as sublime beings emanate in the worlds of the denizens of hell and tormented spirits in order to protect sentient beings, the self-manifesting teacher appears as the display of most rapturous wrathful deities arrayed

in Akaniṣṭha through the contrivance of his spirituality and his miraculous ability to actualise the wrathful deities who primordially abide.

However, it is most implicit that he too has an ordinary form because he appears in the ordinary forms of tormented spirits and so forth. The sages who train living beings also appear to emanate in ordinary forms which experience birth, old age, death, sickness, distemper and so forth, and in fact they do become ordinary (in form). Even the lion and other (animals) who support the thrones in Akaniṣṭha appear in ordinary realms. in the desire realm, it is clearly explained that their display of five attributes itself is a display of the conquerors, inasmuch as they are self-manifesting symbols, representing power and so forth.[3]

The response to the second proposition is that Rudra does not experience sufferings in evil existences as one endowed with independent characteristics. This is because Rudra is himself an emanational array of self-manifesting pristine cognition. The description of the omniscient (Heruka) perceiving him by virtue of his past service does not indicate that this apparitional Rudra actually had (the experience of suffering); but it does indicate that (suffering) is generated through such causes for those of posterity who do emerge in the world with independent characteristics of the Rudra-type.[4]

This is reminiscent of a common Sūtra which reveals that when the dwarf Angullmāla had formed a garland of the fingers of nine hundred and ninety-nine men whom he had slain, he was tamed by the Buddha and then shown to have (ultimately) no defect. However it was in fact an emanation of the Tathāgatas who slew phantom human beings of his own emanation so that the garland was strung. Intending that the supreme antidotes would be untainted by defects for the sake of posterity.[5]

This is also Illustrated by those emanational pious attendants who have transcended the limits of their training. Having previously transcended such (limits), they subsequently display the miracle whereby they are perceived by a retinue of creatures in the evil existences, and in this way they train (those creatures) as monks. On such occasions also, the emanations do not experience suffering either through having accumulated deeds (appropriate to suffering) or through the continuum of past and future (events).[6]

However the present case is even more sublime than these. An emanational Rudra and his maṇḍala are not revealed after being (mundanely) revealed in the perception of others. Rather, when the maṇḍala of the wrathful deities is naturally actualised, the contemplation of this display of pristine cognition becomes manifest in and of itself as a miracle of magical pristine cognition; and it is on this basis that the emanations occur, appearing in the world of those to be trained. If the emanational basis were not so, it would be improper for such emanational forms to emerge at all. These are consistent, just as the moon in the sky and the reflection of the moon in a pool of water are not different in their shape. There would occur the defect of uncertainty if, for example, despite the presence of the moon in the sky there were other forms such as a tree which appeared in the pool.

Again, in the opinion of some, the oceanic emanations of the Buddhas which appear, do appear different to the display of Buddha-body and pristine cognition because there is a distinction between (the former which appear) through the power of trainees, and (the latter) which abide in the ground. Yet, in the genuine essence saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are without duality. in accordance with axioms such as the single basis,[7] the spontaneously present pristine cognition arises as this or that (emanation) from the disposition of the ground, which is the basis for their arising.

Nonetheless, you may ask, does this not mean that Impurity would also be present in the arising ground, or else that (the ground) would appear (impure) to trainees? How can you say that there is impurity? When (an emanation) is actively perceived among the six classes of living beings, its arising ground or display of spirituality is explained to be a naturally pure display which appears in the oceanic perceptual range of the six classes of living beings. This is because it is through the natural expression of the six centres within the energy channels (of the body) that the appearances of the world of the six classes of living beings exist.[8] It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The appearance of the six world-systems.
Through the natural expression of the six centres.
Is a primordial appearance, spontaneously present.
But it appears in its (mundane) way
Through the action of vital energy and mind.

Now, although in the circumstances of saṃsāra happiness, suffering and so forth are experienced as such through ignorance, when the nature of saṃsāra has been conclusively realised to resemble a reflected image, the basis for the arising of those (experiences, i.e. the six centres) also gives rise to the display of the six sages in the world-systems of the different six classes of living beings.[9] Since it is this basis for the arising of the six classes of living beings that indeed appears, no saṃsāra is produced in which the six classes of living beings have independent characteristics; just as when diverse miracles are displayed, they are without (independent characteristics) to those spiritual warriors whose deeds are pure, and just as a mirror reflects all things and yet is essentially untainted.[10]

So it is that the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44) says:

The oceanic natures of the fields
Appear as the diverse perceptual range of mind.
Just as in a clear ocean
Oceanic reflected images appear.
In the oceanic natures of earth, water.
Fire, air, space and mind.
There are fields which equal the number of oceanic atoms.
There are no arrays which do not abide therein:
Some are naturally pure.
Some have diverse perceptual ranges.
And all the realms of living beings clearly appear.

Even in a single pore of hair
There are oceans of Buddha-fields,
And their diversity is indescribable.

Therefore, the reality of the buddhas has an inconceivable perceptual range. How can it be appraised by those of grasping intellect?

Moreover, saṃsāra is not brought about by the appearance of the six classes of living beings who resemble either the six sages or apparitional and illusory creatures. The different kinds of suffering will indeed be reversed if the causal basis or egotism which gives rise to the suffering of saṃsāra is reversed. However in this circumstance the nature of the teachers who appropriately appear in saṃsāra through the spirituality of the arising basis, i.e. the petals of the six energy centres, does not become non-existent like (an image) on the surface of a mirror. Otherwise, the (Impure) perception of the six classes of beings could be suddenly fabricated by anyone,[11] and all the attributes of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa contained within the great Buddha-body of perfect rapture would be incomplete, and the display of Buddha-body and spirituality which appears in impure saṃsāra would be interrupted. This is why the Yogins of the Mind-Only School also profess that three essential natures are present from beginningless time in the ground-of-all, namely. those which appear as objects, concepts, and corporeal forms.[12]

It is held that although impurities are transformed into a pure nature through refinement, the genuine ground-of-all is spontaneously present as the Buddha-body of reality, without changing throughout the three times—past, future, and present. In this way, the display of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa or basis for arising does not become non-existent.

When this response is condensed: Rudra attained Buddha-hood as Samantabhadra in primordial original time, and then, in order to subdue the Māra who appeared within his self-manifesting energy centres, he became manifest in and of himself. He is indeed without independent characteristics because he manifests in and of himself. Nor is he an emanation, because emanations refer to the extraneous perception of those to be trained, and because, being self-manifest, he does not differentiate between those to be trained and the training itself. Therefore, he appears primordially at the beginning, manifest in and of himself. This (ultimate view of emanation) is dissimilar to (the views of) the Sūtras, among which there are the following distinctions or dissimilar purposes which ostensibly appear: differences in time, differences in the mind which is trained and that which trains, and differences with respect to the single essence.[13]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the interrelationship of the eaturdhyāna and the twelve lower realms of rūoadhātu. see the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction.

[2]:

It is generally considered that human beings, by definition within

kāmadhātu, can attain the caturdhyāna of the form realms (Mahāvyutpatti 1447-1481) and the catuḥsamāpatti of the formless realms (Mahāvyutpatti 1492-1495).

[3]:

On the five thrones and their respective attributes, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 383-389.

[4]:

By emphasising the emanational character of Rudra, kLons-chen-pa indicates the allegorical and didactic nature of the Rudra legend. The phrase "by virtue of his past service..." (jīḥ sneon bsten-pa'i stobs-kyis...), on which see also pp. 1094, 1108, refers to the past connection between Rudra and Vajrapāṇi, i.e. between Thar-pa and Thub-dka' gzhon-nu.

[5]:

See the Aṅgulimāliyasūtra, T. 213. The "supreme antidotes" (gnyen-po mchog-rnams) refer to the wrathful means of discipline assumed by the wrathful deities.

[6]:

e.g., the sojourn of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana in the hells. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 38-39.

[7]:

On the axioms of Mahāyoga, including the "single basis" (rgyu gcig-pa), see above. Ch. 11, pp. 890ff.

[8]:

On the pure and impure expressions of the seed-syllables within the six centres of the body, which are said to give rise to Buddha-hood or to the six realms of saṃsāra, see above. Ch. 4, pp. 552-553.

[9]:

On these appearances of the six sages and their colour symbolism, see also above. Ch. 6, p. 655, note 30.

[10]:

The pure emanational character of fields, which to obscure vision appear as saṃsāra, is indicated in the following verses from the Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 66bff. especially the quotation from sgyu-'phrul rgyas-pa, p. 50a.

[11]:

I.e. impure perception would recur if the basis for its purification were a transient phenomenon.

[12]:

in the Cittamātra view, the ālaya is said to give rise to three propensities (bag-chags gsum); those of objects (yul) which appear as the container world-systems, those of concepts (don) which appear as the eight aggregates of consciousness, and those of corporeal forms (lus) which appear as the physical forms of the different classes of living beings. For a rNying-ma discussion of this structure, see kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, yid-bzhin mdzod, pp. 10ff. The distinction between this Cittamātra view and that upheld by the Great Madhyamaka (dbu-ma chen-po) is that the former identify the ālaya with mind (citta) while the latter identify it with pristine cognition (jñāna). Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 84a-92a.

[13]:

On these differences in the time, trainees, trainings, and essence of the nirmāṇakāya, as expressed in the Sūtras and the Tantras, see below, pp. 1093-1095. and NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, p. 63a-66b.

Commentary 3.3: The Recognition of (appropriate) Times and Teachers
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[As for the recognition of the significance of this chapter: It has three sections, namely, the recognition of the maṇḍala, the recognition of Rudra, and the recognition of (appropriate) times and teachers.]

The third section (of the recognition of the significance of this chapter—see p. 1075) is the recognition of times and teachers. It comprises recognition of the similarity of times (at which Rudra is subdued according to the Sūtras and the Tantras) and the identity of teachers who tame (Rudra according to the Sūtras and the Tantras).

The first has two aspects, of which the former sets forth the following argument: One might suggest that there is some dissimilarity inasmuch as the times are different because here (in the tantras) Rudra is subdued in beginningless time whereas according to the Sūtras he is subdued in the context of a specific teaching; or that even the location is different because it is said in the Sūtras to be Jambudvīpa and in this context to be Akaniṣṭha. If so, the response would be that the words "beginningless time" are expressed because here there is revealed to be an expanse of sameness throughout the four times. It is not exclusively one which precedes all years or aeons, nor does it definitely refer, for example, to this teaching-period or Bhadrakapla. The miracle which reveals the field of training and a single Indivisible time moment as the aeons, ancient and recent, and as many world-systems is inconceivable. Therefore, beginningless time is, with reference to the essence, an indefinite time. There is no contradiction even when it is recognised as a temporal setting in the individual

perception of living beings.[1]

Regarding Jambudvīpa and Akaniṣṭha: apart from merely being different manifestations of the individual perception of the teacher and living beings, Akaniṣṭha cannot be recognised as a specific spatial dimension. This is because it is in the perception of pure bodhisattvas, and of buddhas, and because anything Included in that (perception) is included in Akaniṣṭha. It does not refer to an extaneously [extraneously?] existing field composed of different material substances such as the Akaniṣṭha of the form realms.[2]

The second (i.e. the recognition of the Identity of the teacher who grants instruction) also has two aspects, of which the former sets forth the following argument: One might suggest that (the teacher of Rudra) who grants instruction in the sūtras and the one who grants instruction here (in the tantras) are identical or different; and counter, in the first case, that they are different because (the teacher of Rudra) in the Sūtras is said to be Guhyapati and here instruction is said to be given by Heruka. In the latter case too one might counter that (the teacher of the tantras) appears to be in harmony with that of the sūtras because of the aforementioned quotation beginning, "The omniscient one who perceived him by virtue of his past service..."[3]

The response to those two points is that in general Guhyapati and Heruka are not different. The one who appears as Guhyapati in the presence of those to be trained abides as Heruka in the pure self-manifesting field, so that they indeed resemble outer and inner aspects.

It is not certain on the other hand that, just because (the teacher of the tantras) is similar in aspect to (the teacher of) the sūtras, they are identical; just as there are other tantras resembling this (Secert Nucleus) or just as the terms lha-sbyin and mchod-sbyin are similar but different.

Therefore, just as (Heruka) grants instruction in the selfmanifesting Akaniṣṭha through a display of contemplation, he appears as Guhyapati to grant instruction in the perception of those to be trained. It is not a contradiction that the times and teachers (of the tantras and sūtras) are similar because they both within the perceptual range of the buddhas. Such is the power of their blessing.

In brief, just as the lion-throne appears to symbolise the presence of the four kinds of fearlessness, Rudra appears to be subdued in order to symbolise victory over all demons and outside aggressors, and the complete mastery which overwhelms proud spirits. At the time when enlightenment is attained, Māra must appear to be subdued. Thus when the subjugation of Rudra, as the first and foremost of the host of proud demons or Māras, is revealed, one attains mastery over the appearances of the self-manifesting energy centres.[4]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the nature of this fourth temporal dimension, also known as

"indefinite time" (ma-nges-pa'i dus), see above. Ch. 1, pp. 354-357.

[2]:

On the distinction between the extraneously manifest Akaniṣṭha of the śuddhanivāsa and the self-manifest Ghanavyūha Akaniṣṭha realm, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 357-389.

[3]:

These words imply that the omniscient one (Heruka) is identical to Vajrapāṇi, who, as gDan-phag, had this past connection with Rudra. See also above, note 18.

[4]:

Again, the subjugation of Rudra is viewed from the resultant standpoint as an internal event occurring at the moment of enlightenment.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.1]

Then the identity of all the Tathāgatas, the essential nature of all the Buddhas, manifested as the maṇḍala of wrathful deities. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi bdag-po sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyi ngo-bo-nyid-kyis khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-du mngon-par 'du-mdzad-de / [1]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary (503.3-534.4)]

The interlinear commentary (on Ch. 15) includes a brief teaching on the emergence of the wrathful deities and a detailed exegesis of their natural expression.

[The former (comments on Ch. 15.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of the peaceful deities had been revealed. then (de-nas) glorious Samantabhadra, the great identity of all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi bdag-po) of the ten directions and four times, who is the essential nature (ngo-bo-nyid-kyis) of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Buddhas (sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyi), manifested as (mngon-par mdzad-de) the primordial Buddha-body of perfect rapture in the maṇḍala of (-i dkyil-'khor-du) self-manifesting

wrathful deities (khro-bo) in the field of the spontaneous Bounteous Array, without straying from the disposition of the Buddha-body of reality, free from conceptual elaboration. in this way, he became present as the ground for the emergence of the emanational wrathful deities.

The latter includes both the emergence of the wrathful deities of deeds who are to be trained, and the subjugation of them by the wrathful deities of pristine cognition who grant instruction.

[Emergence of the Wrathful Deities of Deeds who are to be Trained (504.1-511.6):]

This is an explanation with two aspects, one Inquiring into the purpose (of these wrathful emanations) and the other responding to that inquiry. The first (comments on Ch. 15.2):

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.2]

... For what, one might ask, is this revealed? [2] ...

[Tibetan]

de-ci'i phyir zhe-na / [2]

Commentary:

This is an explanation with two aspects, one Inquiring into the purpose (of these wrathful emanations) and the other responding to that inquiry. The first (comments on Ch. 15.2):

For what (ci'i phyir) intention or reason, one might ask (zhe-na), is there revealed this (de) maṇḍala of wrathful deities, including the body of perfect rapture or basis from which they arise and the emanations which arise from it?

The second (i.e. the response) comprises both the causal basis from which (wrathful emanations) are created, and the result into which they are matured. in order for the wrathful deities of the emanational body to grant instruction, the wrathful deities of the body of perfect rapture must necessarily be present. The self-manifesting miraculous deeds displayed by the wrathful deities of the body of perfect rapture are displayed in the world of those to be trained by all kinds of wrathful deities of the emanational body. Their relationship indeed resembles that of water and the moon's reflection in it, so that the apparitional nature is displayed to grant instruction in impure circumstances.

Although there may seem to be causes and results or good and evil generated by good and evil trainees and instructions, in this circumstance there is actually no dichotomy of good and evil because the essence itself arises and appears in that manner. Indeed, this (resultant path) and the Sūtras both make a connection between the ground for arising (i.e. the body of perfect rapture) and the act of arising (i.e. the emanational body).
[1]

Nor is it necessary for such forms to occur simultaneously: Although the arising act is indeed simultaneous with the arising ground, there is no certain need for the arising ground to be simultaneous with the arising act, just as in the temporal relationship between the moon and the moon's reflection in water. However even when these two do coincide there is no contradiction because they do so through the power of their blessing.

[The former (the causal basis, comments on Ch. 15.3):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan 'char-gzhi-dang 'char-byed. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, PP. 95b-106b, for the sūtra view of this connection.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.3]

... Through conceptions which are deluded with respect to self-hood and manifest attachment to the imaginary, beings are separated from the genuine path. Without understanding the hidden secrets, one becomes manifestly attached to the concealed secrets, and then one is deluded with respect to causes and results. In consequence, [3] ...

[Tibetan]

bdag-tu rmongs-pa'i rtog-pa-dang / brtags-pa-la mngon-par zhen-pas /
yang-dag-pa'i lam-dang bral-ba-dag / gab-pa'i gsang-ba ma-rtogs-par sbas-
pa'i gsang-ba-la mngon-par 'chel-nas/ rgyu-dang 'bras-bu-la rmongs-pas /
[3]

Commentary:

[The former (the causal basis, comments on Ch. 15.3):]

Through the apprehension of a self and its possessions, the conceptions (rtog-pa) of one's own mind which are deluded (rmongs-pa'i) with respect

to selfhood (bdag-tu) of the individual grasp the coemergent ignorance and are attached to the self; and (dang), without knowing that all things are merely symbols similar to reflected images and that they are just given imaginary (brtags-pa) status by the Intellect, there arises a manifest attachment to (la-mngon-par zhen) the true independent existence of each thing.[1]

Through (-pas) this ignorance of the imaginary, objects are possessively grasped. In this way, one wanders in saṃsāra and the causal basis of existence is activated. Beings (dag) who are afflicted in saṃsāra by suffering are separated from (dang-bral-ka) the profound discriminative awareness, the genuine path (yarg-dag-pa'i lam) of disillusionment with saṃsāra. This is the causal basis of all compounded existence.

In addition, without understanding (ma-rtogs-par) the hidden (gab-pa'i) nature or natural secrets (gsang-ba) contained in the tantras and transmissions of profound meaning which are hard to understand, one becomes manifestly attached (mngon-par 'chel) to (la) willful misconduct concerning the concealed secrets (sbas-pa'i gsang-ba) such as the skillful means of rites of sexual union and "liberation". And then (nas), acting in that way, one is deluded with respect to (la-rmongs) one's dependence on inevitable results derived from the relationship between virtuous and sinful causes and (rgyu-dang) pleasant and unpleasant results ('bras-bu). In consequence (-pas), those who practice the profound secrets literally and enter into erroneous paths resemble Thar-pa Nag-po, who was the causal basis for the (subsequent) emergence of Rudra.[2]

Accordingly it says in the Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-7):

Among the Tathāgatas' scriptures
Given by the eternal Great Identity
When he formerly emerged in the past
Are those concerning the nature of the living beings
Who formerly emerged.
At that time all sentient beings
Persevered in wrong views.
And through extremely wrong views
They fell into great Avīci Hell.

The latter, the result into which (that cause) is matured has two parts, namely, the mature result which is the experience of suffering, and the associated result which is the harming of others.

[i. This has two sections, among which the former concerns birth in the hells. (It comments on Ch. 15.4):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the three modes of ignorance, viz. "the ignorance of belief in individual selfhood" (bdag-nyid gcig-pu'i ma-rig-pa), "the coemergent

ignorance" (lhan-cig skyes-pa'i ma-rig-pa), and "the ignorance of the imaginary" (kun-tu brtags-pa'i ma-rig-pa), which are said to give rise to saṃsāra, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b.

[2]:

See above, notes 8-9.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.4]

... [In consequence,] [3] one is cast down by the harsh seeds of existence, and then one is born in the hottest of hells, which is unceasing. One is afflicted there by the excruciating sufferings of Intense heat, and at the very moment when one thinks, "Would that I might experience intense cold rather than this?", one is thoroughly numbed and utterly afflicted by severe pains which split (one's body) in the manner of a lotus flower. Such sufferings endured in the eight (hells) beginning with the hottest, and in the eight (hells) beginning with the coldest are connected with the world-systems and are experienced for twelve thousand great aeons. [4] ...

[Tibetan]

srid-pa'i sa-bon rtsub-mos 'phangs-nas / mtshams-med-pa'i rab-tu tsha-ba'i dmyal-bar skyes-so / de rab-tu tsha-ba'i sdug-bsngal drag-pos gdungs-pa-dang / 'di-bas shin-tu grang-yang ci ma-rung snyam-pa'i mod-la / rab-tu sbrebs-pa-dang / padma-ltar gas-pa'i sdug-bsngal drag-po dag-gis rab-tu gdungs-pa de-lta-bu'i sdug-bsngal rab-tu tsha-ba la-sogs-pa brgyad-dang / shin-tu grang-ba la-sogs-pa brgyad-po-dag-tu / 'jig-rten-gyi kham brgyud-cing bskal-pa chen-po stong-phrag bcu-gnyis-su nyams-ngo / [4]

Commentary:

[The latter, the result into which (that cause) is matured has two parts, namely, the mature result which is the experience of suffering, and the associated result which is the harming of others.]

[i. This has two sections, among which the former concerns birth in the hells. (It comments on Ch. 15.4):]

Deeds such as murder which are motivated by past hatred, deeds connected with pride and jealousy, malice directed towards one's guru and associates (mched-grogs), verbal abuse, wrong view and other such flaws which violate the commitments are the harsh seeds of existence (srid-pa'i sa-bon rtsub). By (-mos) these basest of non-virtues one is cast down ('phangs) without interval into indestructible hell, and then (nas) one is instantly transformed and born (skyes-so) in (-bar) Avīci, the hottest of hells which is unceasing (mtshams-med-pa'i rab-tu tsha-ba'i dmyal).

Therein suffering is experienced for many aeons. One is afflicted by the excruciating sufferings of intense heat (da rab-tu tsha-ba'i sdug-bsngal drag-pos gdungs-pa) there in the hells, and (dang) (the consequences of) one's deeds are to some extent diminished. When one is almost released from that, one sees the conditions of the cold hells, and at the very moment when one thinks, "Would that I might (yang ci ma-rung snyam-pa'i mod-la) be born and experience the suffering in those regions of Intense cold rather than this! ('di-bas shin-tu grang), one is indeed born therein. One is thoroughly numbed (rab-tu sbrebs-pa) and frozen by snow, blizzards and so forth, and (dang) utterly (rab-tu) afflicted (gdungs-pa) over many aeons by (-gis) severe pains pains (sdug-bsngal drag-po-dag) which recur, are hard to endure, and which split (gas-pa'i) one's body into four parts, eight parts and so forth in the Banner of a lotus flower (padma-ltar). Such sufferings (de lta-bu'i sdug-bsngal) are endured alternately in the unbearable hells in their respective pairs, i.e. in the eight beginning with the hottest (rab-tu tsha-ba la-sogs-pa brgyad), namely (Avīci, Prātāpana), Tapanā, Mahāraurava, Raurava, Saṃghāta, Kālasūtra, and Saṃjīva; and (dang) in the eight (brgyad-po dag-tu) beginning with (la-sogs-pa) Mahāpadma the coldest (shin-tu grang-ba), namely, Padma, Utpalā, Huhuva, Hahava, Aṭaṭa, Nirarbuda, and Arbuda.[1]

It says in the Sūtra Which Establishes Recollection (T. 287):

Those who have accumulated unremitting deeds
Are born in the Avīci Hell,
And roasted for a long time by the fires of hell.
Then they are born in Mahāpadma,
And similarly in Arbuda.
Their respective sufferings are thoroughly experienced.

According to the ordinary vehicles, (these sufferings) are revealed to exceed the number of years after which one is released from the hells at (the end of) an aeon and so forth.[2] If, when beings are born in these hells, the destruction of their particular world-system should occur, they are connected with (brgyud) other world-systems ('jig-rten-gyi khams), and (cing) should destruction also occur there, they are born elsewhere to endure the eight pairs of hot and cold hell. These sufferings of heat and cold are experienced (myang-ngo) for (su) a duration of twelve thousand treat aeons (bskal-pa chen-po stong-phrag bcu-gnyis).

Concerning the term "great aeon", it is explained that in a great aeon there are eighty aeons, twenty for each of the processes of creation, duration, destruction, and dissolution which occur in a single world-system.[3]

It says in the Treasury of the Abhidharma (T. 4089):

Thus this created world-system
Endures for twenty aeons.
While its creation, destruction
And quiescent dissolution equal its duration.
These eighty (aeons) comprise a "great aeon".

While this creation and destruction of the external containing-world and the hells (postulated) according to the pious attendants has no true (inherent) existence,[4] in the perception of its sentient beings, however, when one is born therein it does appear that the world-system is created and destroyed, and it appears like a dream that one is born in the different hell realms of other world-systems, which emerge from the propensities and full force of bewilderment.

[The latter section concerns birth among the tormented spirits. (It comments on Ch. 15.5):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The root-text, p. 1064 (Ch. 15, section 4) clearly indicates that these hot and cold hells are experienced in pairs, Avici with Mahāpadma, and so forth.

[2]:

Cf. the duration of these hot and cold hells, as enumerated in Sgam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, pp. 58-62.

[3]:

For a general view of the Buddhist concept of cosmic aeons, see R. Kloetzli, Buddhist Cosmology, pp. 73-76.

[4]:

I.e. in the view of adherents of Madhyamaka among the causal vehicles and in the view of the resultant vehicles. Cf. NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 3.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.5]

... Then that process of maturation comes to an end and one suffers pangs of hunger and thirst among the tormented spirits. Desirable objects become unpleasant, turn into diverse objects—poisonous and harsh, and they even become non-existent. Utterly emaciated and dry, one is born for six great aeons with body, limbs, and sense-organs which are unsatisfactory. [5] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas rnam-par smin-pa-de zad-pa-dang / yi-dvgas ltogs-pa-dang /

skom-pa'i sdug-bsngal-gyis nyen-pa-dang / 'dod-pa'i dngos-po-rnams yid-du mi-'ong-ba-dang / gdug-cing rtsub-pa'i dngos-po sna-tshogs-su 'gyur-ba-dang yang med-par yang 'gyur-zing / shin-tu ring-cing skam-pa-dang / lus-dang yan-lag-dang dbang-po mi-'tsham-par gyur-par bskal-pa chen-po drug-tu skyes-so / [5]

Commentary:

[The latter section concerns birth among the tormented spirits. (It comments on Ch. 15.5):]

Then (de-nas) that process of maturation (rnam-par smin-pa de) in the hells comes to an end and (zad-pa-dang) one is born among the tormented spirits (yi-dvags).

Now there are two ways in which that (hellish condition) comes to an end: there is the cessation of non-virtue, the object to be renounced, by means of a virtuous antidote, as when the heat and cold are subdued by an antidote and cease; and there is the cessation through the maturation of one's own particular result—as when the results of one's virtue and sin are experienced in the manner of a shoot which is no longer able to grow from its seed. The present case refers to the latter.[1]

Now, one might ask, why is one who has the karma to be born among tormented spirits not born among them before ending the karma connected with his or her birth in the hells? If one has both kinds of karma, one cannot permit the lesser to take effect until the result of the greater has first taken its effect, just as when the light of the sun is present the light of planets and stars is invisible. Therefore, the process of ripening occurs first for whichever is the most powerful among the respective kinds of karma, and which is most potent in virtue or sin.

It also says in the Treasury of the Abhidharma (T. 4089):

The cycle of deeds includes
Those which are heaviest.
Those which are closest.
Those which are being experienced
And those of the past.
Among them, the first (mentioned) ripen first.

So this (text) indicates that the heaviest (deeds) are the first (to ripen).

Tormented spirits are so-called because they are afflicted by the fires of hunger and thirst. Food is entirely scarce, but desired in their minds. When born as such, there are general obscurations in that one suffers pangs of hunger and thirst (ltogs-pa-dang skom-pa'i sdug-bsngal-gyis nyen-pa-dang); and there are external obscurations in that the sun and moon which are pleasant to all become tormenting and unpleasant. External desirable objects become unpleasant ('dod-pa'i dngos-po-rnams yid-du mi-'ong-ba) and pure water is seen as puss, blood and so forth.

As it says in the Letter to a Friend (T. 4182):

To tormented spirits, the moon is hot in summer.
And even the sun is cool in winter.

Initially one does not find food and drink, and if one does find it, it cannot pass down the throat; but even if it does pass down the throat one's internal organs blaze with fire. Because fire blazes everywhere outside and inside the body, there is a cycle of flames through which the objects of one's enjoyment turn ('gyur-ba-dang) instantly into (su) diverse objects—poisonous and harsh (gdug-cing rtsub-ba'i dngos-po sna-tshogs).

One desires to enjoy oceans and great rivers when one has thirst, different kinds of food when one is hungry, and pleasant environments and necessities. One actually perceives these (apparitions), but when one approaches them, they turn again into scraps (lhag-rol) or even (yang) their mere traces become nonexistent (med-par 'gyur-zhing), and the suffering increases. Thus one has the obscuration whereby food is scarce. One's bones become merely a cage covered with skin, lacking the complexion of flesh and blood. Utterly emaciated and dry (shin-ru rid-cing skam-pa-dang), one is born (skyes-so) among the tormented spirits, continuing from one world-system to the next, for six great aeons (skal-pa chen-po drug-tu), with body (lus) and limbs which are unsatisfactory, and sense-organs (-danz dbang-po) which are incomplete even to focus on Mount Sumeru. They are (gyur-pa) unsatisfactory (mi-'tshams-par) in nature because they are deformed—with heads as large as Mount Sumeru, mouths as small as the eye of a needle, and so forth.

[ii. The second part concerns the result associated with that causal basis which is one harmful to others. (It comments on Ch. 15.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e the duration of Rudra's stay in the hells was determined entirely by the exhaustion of his past deeds, and not by the positive application of an antidote, which under the guidance of Yama (the sage of the hells) would have reduced that period.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.6]

... Then, when that process of maturation of the coarse obscurations of past deeds has gradually diminished, and one is united with one's previous existence, as a tormented spirit, one becomes a great ogre who is most venomous and fierce. Such beings have one body with a hundred heads, and with diverse kinds of heads, or they have a hundred bodies with a

single head. They have diverse kinds of bodies, with many limbs and diverse kinds of limbs. They bear diverse kinds of harmful hand-implements, and they have a multitude of retainers. They have diverse terrifying forms, and they bellow diverse kinds of terrifying roar. Their forms and roars, stench and bad breath cause all beings to panic in fear. With black vital energy, which is utterly terrifying, and with breath which is cold and hot they disturb the cosms (chiliocosms) throughout the ten directions. They inflict four hundred and four kinds of disease: and they cause insanity and debility. Through these powers, they subjugate the Nāga domains, the realms of the antigods, the god-realms, and those of Brahmakāyika, Abhāsvara, Śubhakarṣṇa, and Br̥hatphala downwards. [6]

...

[Tibetan]

de-nas las-kyi sgrib rtsub-mo'i rnam-par smin-pa-de khad-kyis bsrabs-pa-dang / sngon-gyi srid-pas mtshams-sbyar-nas / yi-dvgas srin-po chen-po rab-tu gdug-pa gtum-po lus-gcig-la mgo brgya-pa-dang / mgo-bo sna-tshogs-dang / lus brgya-la mgo-bo gcig-pa-dang / lus sna-tshogs-pa-dang / yan-lag mang-po-dang / yan-lag sna-tshogs-pa-dang / gdug-pa'i lag-cha sna-tshogs thogs-pa / 'khor rab-tu mang-po-dang / 'jigs-pa'i gzugs sna-tshogs-dang / 'jigs-pa'i nga-ro sna-tshogs sgrogs-pa / gzugs-dang nga-ro-dang / dri-dang kha-rlangs-kyis / thams-cad skyi-bung zhes byed-pa / rab-tu 'jigs-pa'i rlung-nag-dang / grang-ba-dang / tsha-ba'i dbugs-kyis phyogs-bcu kun-tu kham 'khrug-par byed-pa / nad-bzhi brgya-rtsa-bzhis 'debs-par byed-pa / myos-shing nyams-par byed-pa'i mthus / klu'i rigs-dang / lha-ma-yin-gyi ris-dang / lha'i ris-dang / tshangs-ba'i ris-dang / 'od-gsal-dang / dge-rgyas-dang / 'bras-bu che-ba man-chad dbang-du bsdu-so / [6]

Commentary:

[ii. The second part concerns the result associated with that causal basis which is one harmful to others. (It comments on Ch. 15.6):]

Then (de-nas), when that process of maturation of the coarse (rtsub-mo'i rnam-par smin-pa de) obscurations of (-kyi sgrib-pa) one's past deeds (las), or causal basis for birth among the tormented spirits, has also gradually diminished (khad-kyis bsrabs-pa) the rough (causal basis) comes to an end; and (dang) one is united (mtshams-sbyar) and born with (-pas) the mind of Rudra and an existence (srid) determined by the karma of subtle causal basis and of one's previous (sngon-gyi) birth—i.e. as when one has (previously) meditated on a wrathful deity with many heads and arms, and clung to it as (a being with) individual characteristics, and then visualised a retinue of Piśācis and so forth, recited harsh wrathful mantras, and practised the four shocking things (dngos-po bzhi).[1] While this form is essentially one assumed as a tormented spirit (yi-dyags), one then becomes or takes on the guise of a great ogre (srin-po chen-po) bearing weapons, heads and skulls, who is most venomous (rab-tu gdugs-pa) in anger and terrifyingly fierce (gtum-po). Such beings have miraculous abilities—they have one body with a hundred heads (lus gcig-la mgo brgya-pa), and (dang) with diverse (sna-tshogs-dang) dissimilar kinds of head (mgo-bo) such as those of a tiger or lion. There are gods, antigods and so forth who have a hundred bodies (lus brgya-la) with a single head

(mgo-bo gcig-pa-dang) like that of a buffalo, those who have diverse kinds of bodies (lus sna-tshogs-pa-dang) such as that of an elephant or sea-monster, those who have a single body with many limbs (yan-lag mang-po-dang) and diverse kinds of limbs (yan-lag sna-tshogs-pa-dang) dissimilar in colour and form. They bear diverse kinds of harmful hand-implements (gdug-pa'i lag-cha sna-tshogs thogs-pa) including stones and spears, and they have a multitude of retainers ('khor rab-tu mang-po-dang) including Mātariś, sha-za, and Dākinis.[2] They have diverse terrifying forms ('jigs-pa'i gzugs sna-tshogs-dang) including those whose limbs appear as snakes and those which carry wings on their bodies, and they bellow diverse kinds of terrifying roar ('jigs-pa'i nga-ro sna-tshogs sgrogs-pa)—rala rala, rulu rulu, and so forth. As for their conduct, their terrifying forms and (gzugs-dang) unpleasant roars (nga-ro), their foul stench and (dri-dang) bad breath (kha-rlangs-kyis) which suffocate and bring plague and sickness cause all beings to panic in fear (thams-cad skyi-bud zhes byed-pa). They cover all directions with the darkness of their black vital energy, which is utterly terrifying (rab-tu 'jigs-pa'i rlung-nag) and with breath which is cold and hot (-dang grang-ba-dang tsha-ba'i dbugs-kyis). They disturb ('khrug-par byed-pa) all the chiliocosms throughout the ten directions (phyogs-bcu kun-tu khams), zenith and nadir. They inflict ('debs-par byed-pa) on living beings four hundred and four kinds of disease (nad bzhi-brgya rtsa-bzhis) derived from a combination of wind, bile and phlegm,[3] and they have inconceivable powers to cause (byed-pa) insanity (myos) of mind and (dang) debility (nyams-par) of body and recollection.

Through these powers (-'i mthus), they subjugate (dbang-du bsdu-so) the Nāga domains (klu'i ris-dang) of Nanda, Takṣaka and so forth, the realms of the antigods (lha ma-yin-gyi ris-dang) such as Vemacitra, the God realms (lha'i ris) of desire including those of Indra and Viṣṇu, i.e. those from the Parinirmittavaśavartin downwards, and those of the twelve ordinary God-realms downwards (man-chad); namely Brahmakāyika (tshangs-pa'i ris-dang). Brahmapurohita, and Mahābrahmā which sustain the first concentration; Parittābha, Apramāṇābha, and Ābhāsvara ('od-gsal-dang) which sustain the second concentration; Parittaśubha, Apramāṇaśubha, and Śubhakarṣna (dge-rgyas-dang) which sustain the third concentration; and Anabhakra, Puṇyaprasava, and Bṛhatphala ('bras-bu che-ba) which sustain the fourth concentration.[4]

[Subjugation by the Wrathful Deities of Pristine Cognition who Grant Instruction (511.6-534.4):]

The latter part (of the detailed exegesis—see p. 1096) concerns the subjugation (of such venomous beings) by the wrathful deities of pristine cognition who grant instruction.

[It has two aspects, the first of which is the observation of the beings to be trained. (It comments on Ch. 15.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above note 7.

[2]:

On the subjugation of these female consorts, who comprise the twenty-eight Īsvarī and their retinues, and on the emergence of the Mātari, Piśācī, and gatekeepers from their union with the Herukas, see below, pp. 1122-1136. The sha-za are identified with the Piśācī.

[3]:

On these ailments, see above. Ch. 5. note 2; also Rechung Rinpoche, Tibetan Medicine. Ch 2, section 12.

[4]:

On these kāmādhātu and rūpadhātu realms, see the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction; also *ibid.*, Pt. 1. pp. 10a-11b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.7]

... Owing to the service which (Rudra), the (archetype of such beings), had performed in the past, the omniscient (Heruka) observed and then disciplined him through spirituality. [7] ...

[Tibetan]

de sngon bsten-pa'i stobs-kyis thams-cad mkhyen-pas gzigs-nas thugs-rjes 'dul-bar gyur-te / [7]

Commentary:

[Subjugation by the Wrathful Deities of Pristine Cognition who Grant Instruction (511.6-534.4):]

The latter part (of the detailed exegesis—see p. 1096) concerns the subjugation (of such venomous beings) by the wrathful deities of pristine cognition who grant instruction.

[It has two aspects, the first of which is the observation of the beings to be trained. (It comments on Ch. 15.7):]

Rudra, the (de) (archetype of such beings) had in the past (sngon) cultivated an enlightened attitude in the Greater Vehicle and had received empowerments. Owing to (stobs-kyis) the merit of the service (bsten-pa'i) which he had performed for his spiritual benefactor, he had become a field (suitable for) greatness and discipline. The omniscient (thams-cad mkhyen-

pas) Great Glorious Heruka observed (gzigs) that the time had arrived for him to be disciplined, and then (nas) through the deeds of his naturally present spirituality (thugs-rjes), learned in skillful means, he demonstrated the miracle which disciplined ('dul-bar gyur-te) him a manner appropriate to that particular aeon, thinking that the time for Instruction had arrived.

The second, the detailed exegesis of that subjugation, has three sections, namely, the overwhelming of the proud spirit through the four miracles, the eradication of the proud spirit through the enlightened activity of wrath, and the injunction imparted to him after being taken into the fold through spirituality.

[Overwhelming of the Proud Spirit Through the Four Miracles (512.4-516.2):]

[This has two subdivisions, of which (the former) concerns the meditative absorption in contemplation which is the causal basis. (It comments on Ch. 15.8):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.8]

... In order that the Tathāgata, the Magical Net which is an indestructible array of greatness, might display the charisma of great pride which disciplines the lord of the three levels of existence within the ten directions of the six world-systems, this identity of the indestructible body, speech, and mind of all the Tathāgatas, the Transcendent Lord and Great Joyous One, became absorbed in the kingly contemplation of the Magical Net, which emanates as the great cloud of the maṇḍala of kingly wrathful deities. [8] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa che-ba'i rdo-rje bkod-pa sgyu-'phrul dra-ba /
'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i srid-pa gsum-gyi bdag-po 'dul-ba'i nga-rgyal
chen-po'i gzi-brjid bstan-pa'i phyir / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi sku-
gsung-thugs / rdo-rje'i bdag-po / bcom-ldan-das dgyes-pa chen-po khro-
bo'i rgyal-po'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin-chen-po rnam-par 'phro-pa'i /
sgyu-'phrul drva-ba'i rgyal-po'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-te / [8]

Commentary:

[The second, the detailed exegesis of that subjugation, has three sections, namely, the overwhelming of the proud spirit through the four miracles, the eradication of the proud spirit through the enlightened activity of wrath, and the injunction imparted to him after being taken into

the fold through spirituality.]

[Overwhelming of the Proud Spirit Through the Four Miracles (512.4-516.2):]

[This has two subdivisions, of which (the former) concerns the meditative absorption in contemplation which is the causal basis. (It comments on Ch. 15.8):]

Once the wrathful deities of deeds who are to be trained had appeared, then (de-nas) in order to reveal the wrathful deities of pristine cognition who grant instruction, the body of reality of the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) emerged in the body of perfect rapture of the wrathful deities, manifesting in and of itself from the sky-like disposition of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba), which is (-i) without duality of appearance and emptiness, and a natural array (bkod-pa) of non-dual indestructible greatness (che-ba'i rdo-rje), without partiality or bias.

The reason (for this emergence) is in order that he might display the charisma (gzi-brjid bstan-pa'i phyir) of great pride (nga-rgyal chen-po'i) which overwhelms all proud beings including those who have hatred, and which disciplines ('dul-ba'i) proud Rudra, the lord of the three levels of existence (srid-gsum-gyi bdag-po) in the field of the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i).[1]

Thus Samantabhadra, the great identity of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi sku-gsung-thugs rdo-rje'i bdag-po), the Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan 'das) and Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) of skillful means which instructs those to be trained. became absorbed in the (-la snyoms-par zhugs-te) contemplation (ting-nge-dzin) of the kingly (rgyal-po'i) self-manifesting pristine cognition of the Magical Net (sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i) which emanates as the great cloud of the maṇḍala of (-i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin-chen-po rnam-par 'phro-ba'i) Herukas, the kingly (rgyal-po) ones among the wrathful deities (khro-bo'i).

[The latter concerns the nature of his miraculous emanation from within that (disposition).]

[It has four sections, the first of which concerns the expanse from which this emanation occurred. (It comments on Ch. 15.9):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The "three levels of existence" (srid-pa gsum) refer to aerial, terrestrial and subterranean realms.

[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.9]

... From the expanse of the reel, the great Krodhīśvarī emerged. With exclamation of "Hi, Hi!", and with a lustrous glow which is joyous, the jewel (penis) and the lotus (vagina) swelled, and then penetration occurred through the joy of their non-dual embrace. [9] ...

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin-nyid-kyi dbyings-nas / khro-mo dbang-phyug chen-mo
mngon-du phyung-ste / hi-hi-zhes dgyes-pa'i gzi-mdangs-kyis / rin-cen
padma rgyas-par mdzad-nas / gnyis-su med-par 'khril-ba'i dgyes-pas thim-
nas / [9]

Commentary:

[The nature of his miraculous emanation from within that (disposition).]

[It has four sections, the first of which concerns the expanse from which this emanation occurred. (It comments on Ch. 15.9):]

From the expanse of (-kyi dbyings-nas) reality or the real (de-bzhin-nyid), the great Krodhīśvarī (khro-mo dbang-phyug chen-mo) of pristine cognition, Samantabhadrī the glowing female passive object,[1] emerged (mngon-du phyung-ste) manifest in and of herself. With exclamations of "Hi Hi!" (hi-hi zhes) and with (-kyis) the lustrous glow (gzi-mdangs) of her body which is joyous (dgyes-pa'i) to the male consort (Samantabhadra), the secret lotus (padma = vagina) swelled (rgyas-par mdzad) with bliss and was displayed. Thereupon, the active male subject Samantabhadra exclaimed, "Ha, ha?", and the jewel (rin-cen = penis) swelled (rgyas-par mdzad). Through the joy of their (-i dgyes-pas) display, the non-dual embrace (gnyis-su med-par 'khril-ba) of the male and female consorts, penetration occurred (thim) of the "gem" in the "lotus", and then (nas) they played.[2]

[The second, concerning the emanation, (comments on Ch. 15.10):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the term gdangs-kyi yul bya-ba-mo kun-tu bzang-mo, see above. Ch. 6, pp. 645-649, and on the way in which the wrathful deities are said to arise from the glow of the peaceful maṇḍala, see above. Ch. 4, pp. 581, 592.

[2]:

Cf. the corresponding causal basis for the emergence of the peaceful maṇḍala, which is the subject of Ch. 2, above.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.10]

... From the cloud of their "enlightened mind" (= seminal fluids), there emerged (the mantra): HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ VIŚVA KRODHA JVALA MAṆḌALA PHAṬ PHAṬ PHAṬ HALA HALA HALA HŪṢ. [10] ...

[Tibetan]

byang-chub sems-kyi sprin-las/ HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ VIŚVAVAJRA
KRODHAJVALA MAṆḌALA PHAṬ PHAṬ PHAṬ HALA HALA HALA HŪṢ /
[10]

Commentary:

[The second, concerning the emanation, (comments on Ch. 15.10):]

The causal basis is that (the wrathful deities) emerged from (las) the cloud of the "enlightened mind" (byang-chub sems-kyi sprin = seminal fluid) of the male consort which descended into the secret centre of the female consort. At that time there was also a secondary condition, namely, (the following mantra) which emerged: HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ VIŚVA KRODHA JVALA MAṆḌALA PHAṬ PHAṬ PHAṬ HALA HALA HALA HŪṢ, which means "May the blazing maṇḍala of wrathful deities on the crossed-vajra which is the identity of Buddha-body, speech and mind destroy to pieces the body, speech and mind of venomous beings because they have three such pernicious aspects!"

[The third, concerning the essence which is emanated (comments on Ch. 15.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.11]

... At these words, pervading the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems, the assemblies of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities came forth, as large as the trichiliocosm and equal in number to the atomic particles of the ten directions, [11] ...

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas-pa khyab-par
khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs stong-gsum-gyi 'jig-rten-tsam / phyogs-bcu'i
rdul-phra-mo snyed 'thon-par gyur-pas / [11]

Commentary:

[The third, concerning the essence which is emanated (comments on Ch. 15.11:)]

At these words (zhes brjod-pas), pervading (khyab-par) all the infinite ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu mtha'-yas-pa) in infinite space, without beginning or end, the assemblies of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs) of the five enlightened families came forth ('thon-par) from the expanse of the secret centre of Samantabhadri the female consort, as large as the trichliocosm (stong-gsum-gyi 'jig-rten-tsam) in their extent, and equal in number to the atomic particles of (-i rdul-phra-mo snyed) all world-systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu). Thus (-pas), (space) was filled.

[The fourth, concerning the signs of that emanation, (comments on Ch. 15.12):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.12]

... and thus all the ten directions of the six world-systems were rocked, further rocked, and absolutely rocked. Sounds were bellowed, further bellowed, and absolutely bellowed. (Instruments) were rattled, further rattled, and absolutely rattled. (Objects) were destroyed, further destroyed, and absolutely destroyed. (Waves) were dispersed, further dispersed, and absolutely dispersed. Among those who abide in all the chiliocosms of the ten directions of the six world-systems, they conquered, further conquered and absolutely conquered those who were most powerful and most resplendent, Maheśvara who was great in strength, and all such beings. [12] ...

[Tibetan]

'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad gYos / rab-tu gYos / kun-tu gYos-so / 'ur-'ur / rab-tu 'ur-'ur / kun-tu 'ur-'ur ro / chem-chem rab-tu chem-chem / kun-tu chem-chem-mo / shig-shig / rab-tu shig-shig / kun-tu shig-shig-go / gtor-gtor / rab-tu gtor-gtor / kun-tu gtor-gtor-ro / / 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i stong-khams thams-cad-na gnas-pa'i dbang che-ba-dang / gzi-brjid che-ba-dang / mthu che-ba'i dbang-phyug chen-po la-sogs-

Commentary:

[The fourth, concerning the signs of that emanation, (comments on Ch. 15.12):]

Since the cloud of wrathful deities radiated throughout the expanse of space in that way, all the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad) and all their mountains and continents were to a lesser degree rocked (gYos), to a middling degree they were further rocked (rab-tu gYos), and to a greater degree they were absolutely rocked (kun-tu gYos-so). Sounds of thunder and so forth to a lesser degree were bellowed ('ur-'ur). to a middling degree they were further bellowed (rab-tu 'ur-'ur). and to a greater degree they were absolutely bellowed (kun-tu 'ur-'ur-ro). The assembled instruments of music such as the divine drum[1] were not merely beaten, but sounding of their own accord they to a lesser degree were rattled (chem-chem), to a middling degree they were further rattled (rab-tu chem-chem), and to a greater degree they were absolutely rattled (kun-tu chem-chem-mo). Gross compounded objects such as mountains and stones were not merely split, but they were to a lesser degree destroyed (shig-shig), to a middling degree they were further destroyed (rab-tu shig-shig), and to a greater degree they were absolutely destroyed (kun-tu shig-shig-go). The waves of the oceans and so forth were to a lesser degree dispersed (gtor-gtor), to a middling degree they were further dispersed (rab-tu gtor-gtor), and to a greater degree they were absolutely dispersed (kun-tu gtor-gtor-ro). These three degrees—lesser, middling, and greater, indicate the regions below, above and upon the earth. There were therefore fifteen great signs when each of these five (actions) assumed the three degrees. This applied to the external objects of the containing-world, and the containing-world was itself overwhelmed.

When (these events) were then applied to internal objects, i.e. the sentient contents (of this containing-world), the three kinds of rocking applied to the past, present and future thoughts of living beings ('gro-ba'i sems-gsum), the three kinds of bellowing to the three media (of body, speech and mind), the three kinds of rattling to object, subject and their interaction, the three degrees of destruction to the three poisons, and the three degrees of dispersal to renunciation, antidote and retention, making fifteen in all.[2]

When they were applied to the secret objects of pristine cognition, the three kinds of rocking applied to the selfmanifesting appearance of the five lights, the three kinds of bellowing to the radiance of the celestial palace of pristine cognition throughout the ten directions, the three kinds of rattling to the supported maṇḍala of deities, the three kinds of destruction to the array of dissimilar appearances which manifoldly appear, and the three kinds of dispersal to the emanation, absorption, and display of the maṇḍala.[3]

Again, when these were applied to the unsurpassably secret objects, the three kinds of rocking applied to apparitional objects which are positive, negative or neutral, the three degrees of bellowing to consciousness which

is refuted, proven or neither, the three kinds of rattling to the naturally liberated Samantabhadra who arises as skillful means. discriminative awareness, and their coalescence; the three kinds of destruction to the pristine cognition free from conceptual elaboration which at that time arises as bliss, radiance, and non-conceptualisation; and the three degrees of dispersal to the destruction of renunciation, antidote and retention by natural realisation. Thus, there were fifteen great signs of the liberation of saṃsāra in reality.[4]

Then as a result of such revelations, among those who abide in all the (thams-cad-na gnas-pa'i) great trichilocosms (stong-khams) of the ten directions of the six world systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i), those who were most powerful (dbang che-ba) as lords in their respective abodes, and (-dang) those who were most resplendent (gzi-brjid che-ba-dang) and lustrous, the god Maheśvara (dbang-phyug chen-po), who was great in (che-ba'i) power, ability and strength (mthu). Brahmā, Indra, and all such beings (la-sogs-pa thams-cad), collapsed.

The wrathful deities conquered (brgyal) them so that their splendour was diminished, they further conquered (rab-tu brgyal) them so that they could not speak at all, and they absolutely conquered (kun-tu brgyal-bar gyur-to) them so that they were terrified and forgot their show of bravado.

[The Eradication of the Proud Spirit through the Enlightened Activity of Wrath (516.2-530.2):]

The second section (of the detailed exegesis of this subjugation) concerns the eradication of the proud spirit through the enlightened activity of wrath. It has four subdivisions, namely, the array of the foremost maṇḍala of pristine cognition, the actual "liberation" of the proud male spirits, the joyfulness experienced through sexual union with the female spirits, and the emanation of the maṇḍala of the retinue.

[i. The first of these has two sections, of which the former concerning the presence of the central deity Che-mchog (comments on Ch. 15.13):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The "divine drum" (Iha'i rnga-bo-che) is the drum of Devendra, the sage of the god-realms, which rouses the gods from their complacency and reveals the impermanence of their celestial condition.

[2]:

"subject, object and their interaction" (gzung-dang 'dzin-pa-dang gnyis-bcas); "renunciation, antidote and retention" (spang-gnyen-'dzin-pa-dang bcas-pa).

[3]:

On the self-manifest appearance of five lights or seminal points, which gives rise to the maṇḍala of deities, see above. Ch. 13, pp. 1022-1044.

[4]:

"consciousness which is refuted, proven, or neither" (shes-pa dgag-sgrub bar-ma gsum).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.13]

... Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One himself, became transformed in all respects into the dark brown Buddha-body of the Blood-Drinker, very terrifying, most awesome, in a great blaze (of light) which causes panic, with heads, arms, and legs equal in number to the atomic particles of the chiliocosm, holding diverse weapons; and he then turned into a form with three heads, six arms, and four legs. Rejoicing in a great charnel ground, in the midst of an ocean of blood, upon a mountain of human bones, and at the centre of a spacious circle which greatly blazes forth, he stood with (left legs) extending and (right legs) drawn in, upon a seat which comprised Maheśvara and the most proud mistress of the charnel ground, husband and wife. [13] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po-nyid / 'jigs-byed chen-po shin-tu rngam-pa skyi-bung-zhes byed-pa'i 'bar-ba chen-po'i-khrag 'thung sku smug-nag cir-yang 'gyur-ba dbu-dang phyag-dang zhabs stong-khams-gyi rdul-snyed mtshon-cha sna-tshogs 'dzin-pa-de dbu-gsum phyag-drug zhabs-bzhir gyur-te / dur-khrod chen-por dgyes-nas khrag-gi rgya-mtsho'i dkyil-na / keng-rus chen-po'i ri-rab-kyi steng 'bar-ba chen-po'i klong-gi 'khor-lo'i dkyil-na dbang-phyug chen-po-dang / dur-khrod-kyi bdag-po dregs-pa chen-po khyo-shug-gi gdan-la brkyang-bskum-su bzhugs-so / [13]

Commentary:

[The Eradication of the Proud Spirit through the Enlightened Activity of Wrath (516.2-530.2):]

The second section (of the detailed exegesis of this subjugation) concerns the eradication of the proud spirit through the enlightened activity of wrath. It has four subdivisions, namely, the array of the foremost maṇḍala of pristine cognition, the actual "liberation" of the proud male spirits, the joyfulness experienced through sexual union with the female spirits, and the emanation of the maṇḍala of the retinue.

[i. The first of these has two sections, of which the former concerning the presence of the central deity Che-mchog (comments on Ch. 15.13):]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (de-nas bcom-dan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po) Samantabhadra himself (nyid) manifested and became in all respects transformed (cir-yang 'gyur-ba) into the dark brown Buddha-body of (sku smug-nag) the Blood Drinker (khrag-'thung) Chemchog, a very terrifying ('jigs-byed chen-po) and most awesome (shin-tu rngam-pa) guise, emanating in a great blaze ('bar-ba chen-po) of light derived from a hundred thousand suns—the lustrous glow of pristine cognition which causes panic (skyi-bud byed-pa'i). He is endowed with heads, arms and legs (dbu-dang phyag-dang zhabs), equal in number to the atomic particles of the (-kyi rdul-snyed) infinite chiliocosm (stong-khams), holding diverse weapons (mtshon-cha sna-tshogs 'dzin-pa) in his hands, such as the vajra and the wheel.

He then turned into a form with (gyur-te) three heads (dbu-gsum) which represent the three approaches to liberation, six arms (phyag-drug) which represent the six transcendental perfections, and four legs (zhabs-bzhir) which represent the four supports for miraculous ability.[1] He became present, rejoicing in a great charnel ground (dur-khrod chen-por dgyes-nas), indicating that saṃsāra is inherently pure without having to be renounced, in the (na) spacious midst (dkyil) of an ocean of blood (khraggi rgya-mtsho'i) indicating that desire is inherently pure, upon an (kyi-steng) accumulated heap and great mountain (ri-rab) peak of human bones (keng-rus chen-po'i) to symbolise that hatred is inherently pure without having to be abandoned, and at the centre of a (-'i dkyil-la) four-spoked spacious (klong-gi) circle ('khor), which greatly blazes forth ('bar-ba chen-po'i) the volcanic flames of pristine cognition to indicate that delusion is inherently pure. There he stood with (-su bzhugs-so) left (legs) extending (brkyangs) and right (legs) bent (bskums), on a seat which comprised (-gi gdan-la) the god Maheśvara (dbang-phyug chen-po) or Mahādeva and (dang) the most proud mistress of the charnel ground (dur-khrod-kyi bdag-po dregs-pa chen-po) or Umādevī, husband and wife (khyo-shug).[2]

There are some who hold that the right legs are extended and the left legs bent, but that system does not correspond to the pure view of discriminative awareness and skillful means.[3]

[The latter, concerning the array of his retinue, the four enlightened families, (comments on Ch. 15.14):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the "three approaches to liberation ", see above. Ch. 1, PP. 378-380; and on the "four supports for miraculous ability", *ibid.* p. 385. For "the six perfections", see Har Dayal, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-270.

[2]:

As stated below, p. 1117, in kLong-chen-pa's view, this description refers to the transformation of Che-mchog Heruka into the embodiment at

the centre of the wrathful maṇḍala, who is known as Buddha Heruka when corresponding to Vairocana. According to Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 375, this central figure is Vajraheruka, corresponding to Akṣobhya. Regarding the "seat", it is perhaps significant, as H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery. p. 279, has indicated, the Indian tradition holds Rudra to be the offspring of Mahādeva and Umādevī.

[3]:

Cf. Lo-chen, op. cit., pp. 375-376, who, while recognising kLong-chen-pa's view, holds the alternative opinion on the basis of a Sanskrit manuscript which read āliḍhapāda, with reference to the right leg being extended.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.14]

... As for that cloud-mass of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities: there were some associated with the great glorious Blood-Drinker who stands in the eastern direction, there were some associated with the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker who stands in the southern direction, there were some associated with the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker who stands in the western direction, and there were some associated with the great glorious and universal Karma Blood-Drinker who stands in the northern direction. All of these were endowed with a very terrifying guise, an awesome roar, and a blazing aura, with three heads, six arms, and four legs. They stood with (legs) extended and drawn in, upon seats which comprise husband and wife couples of Gandharvas, Yaksas, Ogres, Yama-spirits, and other such beings. The host of the great Blood-Drinker queens also stood, embracing their respective Buddha-bodies. [14] ...

[Tibetan]

khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin-phung de-dag-kyang / la-la-ni dpal khrag-'thung chen-po [rdo-rjer] gyur-te shar-phyogs-su bzhugs-so / la-la-ni dpal khrag-'thung chen-po rin-po-cher gyur-te lho-phyogs-su bzhugs-so / la-la-ni dpal khrag-'thung chen-po padmar gyur-te nub-phyogs-su bzhugs-so / la-la-ni dpal khrag-'thung chen-po kun-tu las-su gyur-te byang-phyogs-su bzhugs-so / de-dag kun-kyang 'jig-byed chen-po'i cha-lugs-dang / rngam-pa'i nga-ro-dang / 'bar-ba'i klong-na dbu-gsum phyag-drug zhabs-bzhis / dri-za-dang / gnod-sbyin-dang / srin-po-dang / gshin-rje la-sogs-pa khyo-shug-gi gdan byas-pa-la [brkyang-bskums-su] bzhugs-so / btsun-so khrag-'thung chen-mo'i tshogs-[rnams]-kyang so-so'i sku-la 'khril-ba'i tshul-gyis bzhugs-so / [14]

Commentary:

[The latter, concerning the array of his retinue, the four enlightened

families, (comments on Ch. 15.14):]

As for (kyang) the hosts who form that cloud-mass of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin-phung de-dag) emanating in the above manner: they are the natural expressions of the five or four enlightened families.[1] There were some (la-la-ni) belonging to the enlightened family of the mirror-like pristine cognition who associated with (gyur-te) the great glorious Blood-Drinker (dpal khrag-'thung chen-por). Vajra Heruka, who stands in the eastern direction (shar-phyogs-su bzhugs-so) or spoke of the maṇḍala. Some hold him to be the Buddha Heruka but they are imperceptive because Che-mchog himself is said to be the Buddha Heruka.[2]

There were some (la-la-ni) belonging to the enlightened family of the pristine cognition of sameness who associated with (gyur-te) the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker (dpal khrag-'thung chen-po rin-po-cher) or Ratna Heruka, who stands in the southern direction (lho-phyogs-su bzhugs-so) or spoke of the maṇḍala. There were some (la-la-ni) belonging to the enlightened family of the pristine cognition of discernment who associated with (gyur-te) the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker (dpal khrag-'thung chen-po padmar) or Padma Heruka, who stands in the western direction (nub-phyogs-su bzhugs-so) or spoke (of the maṇḍala). And there were some (la-la-ni) belonging to the enlightened family of the pristine cognition of accomplishment who associated with (gyur-te) the great glorious universal Karma Blood-Drinker (dpal khrag-'thung chen-po kun-tu las-su) or Karma Heruka, who stands in the northern direction (byang-phyogs-su bzhugs-so) or spoke (of the maṇḍala).

All of these (de-dag kun kyang) four enlightened families of wrathful deities were endowed with a very terrifying guise ('jigs-byed chen-po'i chaluḡs-dang) comprising the eight things of the charnel ground,[3] an awesome roar (rngam-pa'i nga-ro-dang) including sounds of HŪṂ and PHAṬ, and an aura (klong-du) blazing ('bar-ba'i) forth the flames of pristine cognition. They were endowed with three heads (dbu-gsum) which indicate that the three poisons are uprooted and that the three Buddha-bodies are present, six arms (phyag-drug) which indicate that the six classes of living beings are liberated in the expanse, and four legs (zhabs-bzhis) in order to perform acts of benefit for living beings through the four kinds of enlightened activity and liberate the four places of birth right where they are.[4] They stood with legs extended and bent (brkyang-bskums-su bzhugs-so) in the previous manner, upon (la) seats (gdan) which comprise (byas-pa) husband and wife couples (khyo-shug-gi) in copulation to symbolise that the four erroneous views and the four demons have been subdued.[5]

Those seats consist respectively of Gandharvas (dri-za-dang) in the eastern direction, Yakṣas (gnod-sbyin-dang) in the northern direction, ogres (srin-po-dang) in the western direction, Yama-spirits (gshin-rje) in the southern direction, and other such beings (la-sogs-pa), equal to the number of pernicious venomous species.

The host of the great Blood-Drinker queens (btsun-mo khrag-'thung chen-mo'i tshogs-rnams) of the five enlightened families of Herukas,

Buddhakrodhīśvarī and so forth, also (kyang) stood (bzugs-so), entwining and embracing ('khril-ba'i tshul-gyis) the Buddha-bodies (sku-la) of their respective (so-so 'i) wrathful deities.

[Here there is a digression which comments on the interpolated lines Ch. 15.15:]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The enumeration of five Includes the retinue of Buddha Heruka at the centre.

[2]:

As stated above. note 53, Lo-chen Dharmaśrī is representative of the alternative view.

[3]:

The "eight things of the charnel ground" (dur-khrod-kyi chas brgyad) are those enumerated below. Ch. 17. pp. 1166-1167.

[4]:

The "four kinds of enlightened activity" (phrin-las bzhi) are the four rites, described above, pp. 783-786, and below, pp. 1258-1264. The "four places of birth" (skyes-gnas bzhi, Sanskrit caturyoni) are birth from the womb (jārāyuja), birth from the egg (aṇḍaja), birth from moisture (saṃśvedaja), and miraculous birth (upapāduka).

[5]:

The "four erroneous views: (phyin ci-log bzhi) are to apprehend impurity as purity, to apprehend selflessness as self, to apprehend suffering as happiness, and to apprehend impermanence as permanence. The "four demons" (bdud-bzhi) have already been enumerated, foreward and title, note 12.

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[Guhya garbha-Tantra, Text section 15.15]

... [These Herukas of the five enlightened families were absorbed and subsumed together, and then as one (they performed) the wondrous act of granting many instructions]. [15] ...

[Tibetan]

[rigs-lnga'i he-ru-ka gcig-tu bstims-te bsdus-nas/ gcig-gis mang-po 'dul-ba'i ngo-mtshar-te /] [15]

Commentary:

[Here there is a digression which comments on the interpolated lines Ch. 15.15:]

Concerning this passage from "These Herukas of the five enlightened families were absorbed and subsumed together" (rig-lnga'i he-ru-ka gcig-tu bstims-te bsdus-nas) down to "and then as one (they performed) the wondrous act of granting many instructions" (gcig-gis mang-po 'dul-ba'i ngo-mtshar-te): It is not discernible in the Indian sPar-khab Commentary (P. 4718), and in the commentaries of Rong-zom-pa, sMan-lung-pa, and Yung-ston-pa. Even the Sanskrit text (for these lines) is not to be seen. However, because they do appear in the commentary by sGrol-chen Sangs-rgyas Rin-chen, I wonder if there were one or two dissimilar Sanskrit manuscripts. In one Sanskrit manuscript even the words "Then Mahesvara, the great proud spirit endowed with loving kindness" are added! [1]

[ii. The second subdivision concerning the actual "liberation" of the male spirits has two parts. The former describes the fierce awesome sounds made by the proud spirits in their arrogance. (It comments on Ch. 15.16):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This section is not commented on either by kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa or by Lo-chen Dharmasri. The source for this passage is version A of the root-text.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.16]

... Then the Great Proud Spirit and other such beings, in their ferocious temper, revealed great miraculous abilities, diverse and malignant, and with one voice and a malignant roar they emitted fierce wrathful words, with an unpleasant exhalation of breath. Saying, "Release us! Why do you act so, O lord of compassion!", they were angered and enraged in their most venomous temper. [16] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas dregs-pa chen-po la-sogs-pa gtum-pa'i sems-kyis gdug-pa'i

rdzu-'phrul chen-po sna-tshogs bstan-nas / mgrin gcig-tu gdug-pa'i nga-ros
/ brlang-po'i gtum-tshig-tu smras-pa / thong-thong snying-rje'i bdag-po ci
de-ltar byed-dam zhes-zer-zhing / shin-tu gdug-pa'i sems-kyis khros-nas
rngam-mo / [16]

Commentary:

[ii. The second subdivision concerning the actual "liberation" of the male spirits has two parts. The former describes the fierce awesome sounds made by the proud spirits in their arrogance. (It comments on Ch. 15.16):]

Then (de-nas) Rudra, the Great Proud Spirit (dregs-pa chen-po) who was laid out as a seat, and other such beings (la-sogs-pa) who belong among the twenty-eight male spirits of the Maheśvara class[1] were angered and in (-kyis) a malignant ferocious temper (gtum-pa'i sems). Although their bodies were spread out as seats, they revealed great miraculous abilities, diverse and malignant (gdug-pa'i rdzu-'phrul chen-po sna-tshogs bstan-nas), and uniformly, with one voice (mgrin-gcig-tu) and a malignant roar (gdug-pa'i nga-ros), they emitted fierce wrathful words (gtum-tshig-tu smras-ba), with an unpleasant exhalation of breath (brlang-po'i). Saying (zhes-zer-zhing), "Release us! (thong-thong) O lord of compassion (snying-rje'i bdag-po), your apparitions do not act for the benefit of living beings. Why do you act so?" (ci de-ltar byed-dam), they were angered and (khros-nas) enraged (rngam-mo) in their most venomous temper (shin-tu gdug-pa'i sems) because they had been surpassed.

[The latter concerns the actual "liberation" performed through the wrath of compassionate sorcery. It has two aspects, of which the first is the emanation of a cloud of terrifying and awesome forms. (It comments on Ch. 15.17):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

For the full enumeration of twenty-eight male-spirits of the Maheśvara class (dbang-phyug chen-po rgyud nyi-shu-rtsa brgyad-po) alongside their spouses, see below, pp. 1124-1128..

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.17]

... Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, assumed a form with nine heads, eighteen arms, and eight legs, and then with an awesome voice he grew exceedingly wrathful in accordance with the skillful means which instructs through spirituality. Uttering, "HŪM HŪM HŪM HA HA HA KHĀHI KHĀHĪ KHAHĪ!", [17] [he discarded the hearts and all sense-

organs of the hosts of great venomous spirits such as Maheśvara,] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po dbu-dgu phyag-bco-brgyad
zhabs-brgyad-du gnas-nas / rngam-pa'i skad-kyis thugs-rjes 'dul-ba'i thabs-
kyis shin-tu khros nas / HŪM HŪM HŪM HA HA HA KHĀHI KHĀHI
KHĀHI —zhes brjod-pas / [17]

Commentary:

[The latter concerns the actual "liberation" performed through the wrath of compassionate sorcery. It has two aspects, of which the first is the emanation of a cloud of terrifying and awesome forms. (It comments on Ch. 15.17):]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po) Che-mchog himself emanated and assumed a form (gnas) with nine heads (dbu-dgu) as an indication that he outwardly assumed the nine awesome airs of a Heruka, and inwardly possessed the nine kinds of meditative equipoise;[1] with eighteen arms (phyag bcu-brgyad) to symbolise outwardly the eighteen liberators (sgrol-ging bco-brgyad) who "liberate" the venomous spirits, and inwardly the eighteen kinds of emptiness;[2] and eight legs (zhabs-brgyad) to indicate outwardly that he acts on behalf of sentient beings through the four immeasurables and four kinds of enlightened activity, and inwardly that he possesses the eight approaches to liberation.[3]

And then (nas), with an awesome voice (rngam-pa'i skad-kyis) directed at the proud spirits, he displayed in the perception of those to be trained a guise in which he grew exceedingly wrathful (shin-tu khros-nas). This he did in accordance with the skillful means which instructs through spirituality (thugs-rjes 'dul-ba'i thabs-kyis), learned in skillful means. Uttering (zhes brjod-pas) the following mantra,—three syllables HŪM in order that the body, speech and mind (of the spirits) might be gathered, three syllables HA in order to array, or select for eating, the three poisons, and three syllables KHĀHI in order to eat and enjoy their flesh, blood, and bones, (the spirits) trembled and panicked, and then were made ammenable.

[The second concerning the actual "liberation" (comments on Ch. 15.18):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The "nine awesome airs of a heruka" (he-ru-ka'i dgu-klong rngams-pa) are enumerated in the Hevajra Tantra. II. v. 26. For the "nine kinds of meditative equipoise" (snyoms-'jug dgu) see also above. Introduction, p. 173. note 206.

[2]:

On the "eighteen liberators", see above. Ch. 9, note 116. The "eighteen kinds of emptiness" (stong-pa-nyid bco-brgyad) are namely: emptiness of outer phenomena, emptiness of inner phenomena, emptiness of emptiness, great emptiness, ultimate emptiness, emptiness of the compounded, emptiness of the uncompounded, emptiness transcending extremes, emptiness without beginning or end, emptiness that cannot be abandoned, natural emptiness. emptiness of all things, emptiness of individual characteristics, emptiness without reference, essential non-substantial emptiness, non-substantial emptiness, and essential emptiness. See bodrgya tshig-mdzod chen-mo for Tibetan equivalents.

[3]:

On the "eight approaches to liberation" (rnam-pa thar-pa brgyad) and the "four immeasurables" (tshad-med bzhi) see above. Ch. 1, pp. 378-381.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.18]

... [Uttering, ...], [17] he discarded the hearts and all sense-organs of the hosts of great venomous spirits such as Maheśvara, he extracted their entrails, cut off their limbs, ate all their flesh, drank all their blood, and wore all their bones. [18] ...

[Tibetan]

dbang-phyug chen-po la-sogs-pa / gdug-pa chen-po'i tshogs de-dag-gi
snying-dang dbang-po kun phyung / nang-grol kun-drangs / yan-lag kun
bcad-gtubs-nas khrag sha kun zos / khrag kun 'thungs-na rus-pa kun 'chos-
so / [18]

Commentary:

[The second concerning the actual "liberation" (comments on Ch. 15.18):]

Those hosts of wrathful deities discarded the hearts (snying) and inner organs of the hosts of great venomous spirits such as Maheśvara (dbang-phyug chen-po la-sogs-pa gdug-pa chen-po'i tshogs de-dag-gi), cutting off the essence of egotism in the aggregates of consciousness; and (dang) they discarded all (kun phyung) their sense-organs (dbang-po) including the eyes, thereby obstructing the senses which apprehend objects. They extracted all their entrails (nang-khrol kun drangs) including intestines, thereby rejecting attachment to the body which is the support of the subject-object dichotomy. They cut off all their limbs (yan-lag kun bcad gtubs) including the head, thereby destroying the propensities for

existence, and then (nas) they ate all their flesh (sha-kun zos), thereby purifying delusion, drank all their blood (khrag-kun 'thungs), purifying desire, and wore all their bones (-nas rus-pa kun 'chos-so), thereby purifying hatred.

[iii. The third subdivision (of the eradication of the proud spirits) concerns the Joyfulness experienced through sexual union with the female spirits.]

It has two parts, namely, the miracle of absorbing the world and the display manifested through the great rite of sexual union.

[The former has two aspects, of which the first concerning the absorbing of the container-world (comments on Ch. 15.19):]

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Text 15.19 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.19]

... Then, uttering these words: HŪṂ HŪṂ HŪṂ BHYOḤ E ĀRALI HRĪṂ HRĪṂ JAḤ JAḤ, the world-systems of the ten directions along with space were absorbed within an area the size of a single mustard seed. [19]
...

[Tibetan]

de-nas HŪṂ HŪṂ HŪṂ BHYOḤ E ĀRALI JAḤ JAḤ —zhes brjod-pas / phyogs-bcu-'i 'jig-rten-gyi khams-na nam-mkha'-dang bcas-pa yungs-'bru cig-tsam-du chud-par bsdus-so / [19]

Commentary:

[iii. The third subdivision (of the eradication of the proud spirits) concerns the Joyfulness experienced through sexual union with the female spirits.]

It has two parts, namely, the miracle of absorbing the world and the display manifested through the great rite of sexual union.

[The former has two aspects, of which the first concerning the absorbing of the container-world (comments on Ch. 15.19):]

Then (de-nas) they uttered the mantra which absorbs the world together—three syllables HŪṂ, which mean "May (the world) be absorbed by the body, speech, and mind of the Great Glorious One!"; BHYOḤ which means "the Mātārīs"; E which means "here"; ĀRALI which means "Ḍākinīs" or "female intermediaries"; HRĪṂ HRĪṂ which means "gather together";

and JAḤ JAḤ which means, "Come, come", or "Draw in". By uttering these words (zhes brjod-pas), the world systems of the ten directions (phyogs-bcu'i 'jig-rten-kyi kham), along with (dang bcas-pa) the frontiers of space (nam-mkha') all were absorbed within an area the size of a mustard seed (yungs-'bru gcig-tsam-du chud-par bsdus-so). This is the miraculous ability associated with the power of the

Buddhas, on which the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44) accordingly says:

The expanse of space, the expanse of reality itself.
And the expanse of the world-systems
Are absorbed in a single mustard seed.
But their dimensions are undiminished, as before.
This is a miraculous aspect of the expanse of the Sugatas.

[The second concerning the absorption of its sentient contents (comments on Ch. 15.20):]

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Text 15.20 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.20]

... Then they gathered the highest queens among the queens of all female elementals, who are the wives of the highest kings, including the Great Proud Spirit, among the kings of all the male elementals. These are namely Mahārākṣasī Manurākṣasī, Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Indrāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī [Nārāyaṇī], Kaumārī, Piṅgalā, Amṛtā [Sūryā], Saumī [Śāntī], Daṇḍī, Rākṣasī, Bhakṣasī, Ratī, Rudhiramadī, Ekacārīṇī, Manohārikā, Siddhikārī, Vāyudevī, Mahāmāraṇā, Agnāyī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Bhujanā, Varunāṇī, Yellow-red Mahāchāgalā, Dark-blue Mahākumbhakarṇī, Dark-yellow Lambodarā, and so forth, along with their slaves and slaves of slaves, and their servants and servants of servants, equal in number to the atoms of their surrounding fields. [20] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas 'byung-po ma-lus-pa'i rgyal-po'i yang rgyal-po dregs-pa chen-po
la-sogs-pa'i chung-ma 'byung-mo thams-cad-kyi rje-mo'i yang rje-mo / srin-
mo chen-mo'i mi'i srin-mo-dang / tshangs-ma-dang / 'khrug-mo-dang /
dbang-mo-dang / 'jug-sred-mo-dang / gzhon-nu-ma-dang / dmar-mo-dang
/ bdud-rtsi-mo-dang / zhi-ba-mo-dang / be-con-mo-dang / srin-mo-dang /
za-ba-mo-dang / dga'-ba-mo-dang / ra-ro khrag-'thung-myos-ma-dang /
gcig-pur spyod-ma-dang / yid-'phrog-ma-dang / grub-mo-dang / rlung-mo-
dang / gsod-byed-mo-dang / me-mo-dang / phag-mo-dang / rgan-byed-
mo-dang / sna-chen-mo-dang / chu lha-mo-dang / nag-mo chen-mo-dang /
ra-mgo dmar-ser chen-mo-dang / bum-rna sngo-nag mo-dang / gsus-'dzin

ser-nag chen-mo la-sogs-pa / bran-dang yang-bran-dang / gYog-dang / yang-gYog dang 'khor-zhing-gi rdul-snyed-kyang bsdus-so / [20]

Commentary:

[The second concerning the absorption of its sentient contents (comments on Ch. 15.20):]

Then (de-nas) they gathered (bsdus-so) under their sway all the twenty-eight Īśvarī or highest queens (yang rje-mo) among (-i) the queens of all (thams-cad-kyi rje-mo) the common classes of female elementals ('byung-mo) such as Mahākarnī (rna-rnyan chen-mo), who are mistresses of ministerial class. These are the wives of the (-i chung-ma) respective twenty-eight (Īśvaras) including (la-sogs-pa) the Great Proud Spirit (dregs-pa chen-po) and Brahmā, who are the highest kings (yang rgyal-po) among (-i) the kings of all (ma-lus-pa'i rgyal-po) common classes of mighty male elementals ('byung-po), such as Takṣaka, Pāṇḍara and Yakṣa, who are the attendants or great ministers of gods and antigods.[1]

Although these (queens) act in the world according to the ordinary point of view, they are, in the extraordinary view, revealed to be supramundane; and, in the most extraordinary view, they are held to be present within the centres of the energy channels and to appear as such when Buddha-hood is attained, so that they can be taken into the fold (by a Buddha).[2] in this context however because they are easy to understand when described in accordance with their depiction in mundane speech, thought and so forth, I must describe them accordingly.[3]

Now these are known as the wives of their respective husbands, namely: Mahārākṣasī Manurākṣasī (srin-mo chen-mo mi'i srin-mo-dang), the wife of Maheśvara, the proud spirit of the charnel ground, who is delighted by offerings of fat and grease:

Brahmānī (tshang-ma-dang), the wife of Brahmā, who was formerly born from the celestial palace of the lotus-navel (of Viṣṇu). At that time, he emanated a mental body in the form of a girl, and in order to gaze upon her he had four heads, one in each of the four directions, and a fifth above them which Viṣṇu out of jealousy decapitated by hurling a wheel;

Raudrī ('khrug-mo-dang) is the wife of Maheśvara, master of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm. When the gods and antigods were engaged in dispute, she consecrated her body as a fortress into which the army of the gods entered and from which they fought. Consequently the gods were victorious;

Indrānī (dbang-mo-dang) is the wife of Śatakratu. Formerly she lived as the wife of a Ṛṣi and was once invited to a feast by another rsi, who had prepared three seats and then invited those two to the feast. When (her husband), the Ṛṣi, asked why he had done so, the other Ṛṣi said, "There are three of you?", and he made an (extra) gullet protrude from the stomach of Indrānī. At that time the Ṛṣi grew angry and cursed him saying, "May your body have a thousand female sexual organs", whereupon he was transformed into such an apparition. When the gods saw him, they

forgave the R̥ṣi and consecrated him with a thousand eyes, so that he became known as the one "endowed with a thousand sexual organs and a thousand eyes";

Vaiṣṇavī ('jug sred-mo-dang), the wife of Viṣṇu who is pervasive above, upon and below the earth;[4]

Kaumārī (gzhon-nu-mo-dang), the wife of the youth Kārtikeya. When Agni, the god of fire, grew fascinated by a daughter of the gods, Śadānana, the six-faced youth, was born, and on becoming a king among the gods was known as Kārtikeya;

Piṅgalā (dmar-mo-dang), the wife of Nārāyaṇa ('jug-sred), who is so-called because her body resembles copper;

Amṛtā (bdud-rtsi-mo-dang), the wife of Sūrya (the sun) who, during the perfect age of the aeon, was produced from the churning of the ocean, propelled thence into space, and so Illuminated the world, whereupon he became known as "the nectar (amṛta) of the eyes of living beings";[5]

Śāntī (zhi-ba-mo-dang), the wife of Candra (the moon) who, when the ocean was again churned, emerged and was propelled into space, whereupon he became known as "the peaceful one" (śānta) and "the cool one" because he alleviates the afflictions of heat;[6]

Daṇḍī (be-con-mo-dang), the wife of Daṇḍa, who is known as the club-bearing subduer of Śanaīścara (Saturn);

Rākṣasī (srin-mo-dang), the wife of Rākṣasa, who is known as the ten-headed Daśagrīva of Laṅkā in the town of Laṅkāpurī;

Bhakṣasī (za-ba-mo-dang), the wife of Mahākāla, lord of armies, so-called because she "eats" (bhakṣ) the antigods and violators of commitments;

Ratī (dga'-ba-mo-dang), the wife of the lord who grants joy, i.e. Vaiśravaṇa who pleases others by granting wealth;

Rudhiramadī (ra-ro khrag-'thung smyos-ma-dang), the wife of the god Balabhadra, who is so-called because she became intoxicated by wine and then insane after casting a Vedic dice at a sacrificial offering to Indra;

Ekacārīṇī (gcig-pur spyod-ma-dang), the wife of the Gandharva Tambura, a learned musician among the gods, who walked ahead carrying the lute. He is also known as the son of Íśvara, called Bhṛṅgiriṭa;

Manohārikā (yid-phrog-ma-dang) or Lakṣmī, the wife of Kāmadeva, the god of desire, is so-called because she has a beautiful form, captivating when seen by all;

Siddhikarī (grub-mo-dang), the wife of Vasurakṣita, the protector of wealth who accrues wealth and emits lustre;

Vāyudevī (rlung-mo-dang), the wife of Pavana, god of wind, who is the source of wind;

Mahāmāraṇā (gsod-byed-mo-dang), the wife of the killer Māra;

Agnāyī (me-mo-dang), the wife of Agni, god of fire;

Vārāhī (phag-mo-dang), the wife of Mahāvārāha, lord of the locality, who is so-called because he supports the world below the earth in the form of a pig;[7]

Cāmuṇḍī (rgan-byed-mo-dang), the wife of Yama, so called because formerly when she was the wife of Mahādeva she grew angry when he had regard for Umādevī alone, and consequently was transformed into an old woman (rgyan-byed-mo);

Bhujanā (sna chen-mo-dang), the wife of Gaṇapati who was born as the son of Īśvara's wife Puṣpacāpī (=Pārvatī). At the time of his birth, Umādevī inquired if the child was male, and was (deliberately) misinformed that it was a boy, but headless. The child then became headless in accordance with a curse which she made to that effect. In distress, she begged forgiveness and said, "Let him have a new head!" The head of a baby elephant was attached, so that he became known as "elephant-nose";

Varuṇānī (chu lha-mo-dang), the wife of Varuṇa, the god of water;

Mahākālī (nag-mo chen-mo-dang), the wife of the black Mahāviṣāda. In Laṅkāpurī there were four sons of Rākṣasas, namely, Viṣāda (rnam-'jig), Daśagrīva (mgrin-bcu), Kumbhakarṇa (bum-sna), and Rāvaṇa ('bod-grogs);

Yellow-red Chāgalā (ra-mgo dmar-ser chen-mo-dang), the wife of the ogre Daśagrīva;

Dark-Blue Mahākumbhakarṇī (bum-sna sngo-nag chen-mo-dang), the wife of the ogre Kumbhakarṇa;

And Dark-yellow Lambodarā (gsus-'dzin ser-nag chen-mo), the wife of Lambodara (gsus-po-che).

The words "and so forth" (la-sogs-pa) indicate that these (female spirits) were gathered along with the wives of the most powerful spirits, as many as there are, including their slaves and the slaves of their slaves (bran-dang yang-bran) who accomplish external activity, and (dang) their servants and the servants of their servants (gYog-dang yang-gyog) who accomplish internal activity, equal in number to the atoms of their surrounding mundane fields ('khor-zhing-gi rdul-snyed).[8]

[The second part concerns the display manifested by this great rite of sexual union. It has three aspects, of which the first is the causal basis or meditative absorption in contemplation. (It comments on Ch. 15.21):]

[Read next page]

[1]:

The ordinary classes of male and female elementals ('byung-po / mo), Including the Nāga king Takṣaka, are considered to be of ministerial rank in relation to the Īśvaras and Īśvarīs, who are likened to kings and queens. Cf. Lochen, op. cit., p. 378. Note that Mahākārṇī. the queen of female elementals who is of ministerial status is not to be confused with Mahākumbhakarṇī, one of the twenty-eight Īśvarī enumerated below.

[2]:

See above, pp. 1092-1095, where Rudra is viewed in same manner.

[3]:

Despite the inevitable Puranic source for much of this material, the Sanskrit names of the twenty-eight spouses have been rendered in accordance with their corresponding mantras, which are given completely in the sgyu-'phrul rdo-rje me-long exegetical Tantra, Peking bKa'-'gyur, Vol. 10, no. 456, p. 20.4.5-20.4.8. Note that both Manurākṣasī and Raudrī are considered to be spouses of Maheśvara. whereas Lo-chen Dharmasrī, op. cit.. p. 379, claims Manurākṣasī as a consort of Daśagrīva the Rākṣasa and Raudrī as a consort of Mahādeva. According to the present description, however, Manurākṣasī appears to be the spouse of Rudra, and this logically accords with her position at the head of the twenty-eight Īśvarī.

[4]:

'jug-sred-mo may also be rendered as Nārāyaṇī.

[5]:

bdud-rtsi-mo is also given as Sūryā in rdo-rje me-long.

[6]:

Śāntī is also known as Saumī, the "cool one". Cf. rdo-rje me-long.

[7]:

On the significance of this deity in the geomantic rites connected with the construction of a maṇḍala, see above. Ch. 9. pp. 759-760, notes 5-7, and fig. 3.

[8]:

These peripheral deities include the aforementioned elementals of ministerial class. See p. 1123.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.21]

... Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, the great glorious Blood-Drinker, again manifested the very terrifying forms of the five enlightened families through the skillful means which grants instruction, and then all of them through their Joyousness became absorbed in the contemplation called "the emergence of the cloud-like maṇḍala of display". [21] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po dpal khrag-'thung chen-pos
'dul-ba'i thabs-kyis / yang rigs-lnga'i 'jigs-byed chen-por snang-bar byas-nas
/ de-dag kun-kyang dgyes-pas rol-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin-'byung-ba zhes-
bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin la snyoms-par zhugs-nas / [21]

Commentary:

[The second part concerns the display manifested by this great rite of sexual union. It has three aspects, of which the first is the causal basis or meditative absorption in contemplation. (It comments on Ch. 15.21):]

Once these queens had been overpowered, then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (de-nad bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po), the great glorious Blood-Drinker (dpal khrag-'thung chen-pos) of living beings, through the skillful means which grants instruction ('dul-ba'i thabs-kyis) to trainees, again (yang) manifested (snang-bar byas) the blazing host of the very terrifying forms of the five enlightened families (rigs-lnga'i 'jigs-byed chen-por). Then (nas) all these (de-dag kun-kyang) male and female consorts, without duality, became absorbed (snyoms-par zhugs-nas), through their joyousness (dgyes-pas), in the contemplation called the emergence ('byung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la) of the cloud-like maṇḍala of display (rol-pa'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sprin) which pervades the self-manifesting expanse of space.

[The second aspect concerns the secondary condition, the Intonation of the secret mantras of supreme awareness. (It comments on Ch. 15.22):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.22]

... This following (mantra) emerged from their indestructible body,

speech and mind: OM ĀḤ HŪṂ VAJRA PRAVEŚAYA ALALAHŌ. [22] ...

[Tibetan]

sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las 'di dag phyung-ngo / OM ĀḤ HŪṂ VAJRA PRAVEŚA ALALAHŌḤ / [22]

Commentary:

[The second aspect concerns the secondary condition, the Intonation of the secret mantras of supreme awareness. (It comments on Ch. 15.22):]

This following ('di) (mantra) emerged (phyung-ngo) from their indestructible body, speech and mind (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las)—OM ĀḤ HŪṂ indicate the Buddha-body, speech and mind respectively. VAJRA PRAVEŚAYA means "let the vajra penetrate"; and ALALAHŌ indicates greatest amazement.

[The third aspect concerns the result or their non-dual union, (commenting on Ch. 15.23):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.23]

... So saying, the queens of the elemental spirits were excited with extreme desire. They contracted and expanded the lotus maṇḍalas (of their vaginas), and then. Just as iron unites with a magnet, the great ogress Manurākṣasī, Piṅgalā, Ratī, Mahāmāraṇā, Mahākālī, Yellow-red Mahāchāgalā, Dark-blue Mahākumbhakarṇī, and Dark-yellow Lambodarā embraced the body of the transcendent lord, or Great Joyous One, the great glorious Vajra Blood-Drinker. Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Indrāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Kaumārī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Tathāgata (=Buddha) Blood-Drinker. Amṛtā, Śāntī, Daṇḍī, Bhakṣasī, and Rākṣasī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker. Rudhiramādī, Ekacārīṇī, Manohārikā, Siddhikarī, and Vāyudevī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker. And Agnāyī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Bhujanā, and Varuṇāṇī embraced the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious and universal Karma Blood-drinker. [23] ...

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / 'byung-mo'i rgyal-mo-rnams shin-tu chags-pa'i yid
gYos-nas / padma'i dkyil-'khor sdud-cing rgyas-par gyur-nas / dper-na
khab-len-la lcags 'du-ba'i tshul-du / bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po dpal
khrag-'thung chen-po rdo-rje'i sku-la / srin-mo chen-mo mi'i srin-mo-dang

/ dmar-mo-dang / dga'-ba-mo-dang / gsod-byed-mo-dang / nag-mo chen-mo-dang / dmar-ser chen-mo-dang / sngo-nag chen-mo-dang / ser-nag chen-mo-rnams 'khril-lo / bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i sku-la / tshangs-ma-dang / 'khrug-mo-dang / dbang-mo-dang / 'jug-sred-mo-dang / gzhon-nu-mo-rnams 'khril-lo / bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po rin-po-che'i sku-la / bdud-rtsi-mo-dang / zhi-ba-mo-dang / be-con-mo-dang / za-ba-mo-dang / srin-mo-rnams 'khril-lo / bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po padma'i sku-la / khrag-gis myos-ma-dang / gcig-pur spyod-ma-dang / yid-'phrog-ma-dang / grub-mo-dang / rlung-mo-rnams 'khril-lo / bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po kun-tu las-kyi sku-la / me-mo-dang / phag-mo-dang / rgan-byed-mo-dang / sna-chen-mo-dang / chu-lha-mo-rnams 'khril-lo / [23]

Commentary:

[The third aspect concerns the result or their non-dual union, (commenting on Ch. 15.23):]

So saying (zhes brjod-pas), the queens of the elemental spirits ('byung-po'i rgyal-mo rnams) were excited with extreme desire (shin-tu chags-pa'i yid-gYos-nas) for the host of Herukas. They contracted (sdud) or closed, and expanded (cing rgyas-par gyur) or opened the lotus-maṇḍalas (padma'i dkyil-'khor) of their (vaginas), and then (nas), just as iron is attracted to a magnet (dper-na khab-len-la lcags 'du-ba'i tshul-du), eight (queens), namely, Mahārākṣaṣī Manurākṣaṣī, Piṅgalā, Ratī, Mahāmāraṇā, Mahākālī, Yellow-red Chāgalā, Dark-blue Mahākumbhakarnī, and Dark-yellow Lambodarā (srin-mo chen-mo mi'i srin-mo-dang dmar-mo-dang dga'-ba-mo-dang gsod-byed-mo-dang nag-mo chan-mo-dang dmar-ser chen-mo-dang sngo-nag chen-mo-dang ser-nag chen-mo-rnams) embraced ('khril-lo) the body of the transcendent lord, or the Great Joyous One, the treat glorious Vajra Blood-Drinker (bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po deal khrag-'thung chen-po rdo-rje'i sku-la).

Five (queens) of the eastern direction, namely, Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Indrāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Kaumārī (tshang-ma-dang 'khrug-mo-dang dbang-mo-dang 'jug-sred-mo-dang, gzhon-nu-mo-rnams) embraced ('khril-lo) the body of (sku-la) the transcendent lord, the great glorious Tathāgata Blood-Drinker (bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i) or Che-mchog.[1]

Five (queens) of the southern direction, namely, Amṛtā, Śāntī, Daṇḍī, Bhakṣaṣī, and Rākṣaṣī (bdud-rtsi-mo-dang zhi-ba-mo-dang be-con-mo-dang, za-ba-mo-dang, srin-mo-rnams) embraced ('khril-lo) the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Ratna Blood-Drinker (bcom-ldan-'das khrag-'thung chen-po rin-po-che'i sku-la)

Five (queens) of the western direction, namely, Rudhiramadī, Ekacārīṇī, Manohārikā, Siddhikarī, and Vāyudevī (khrag-gi smyos-ma-dang gcig-pur spyod-ma-dang yid 'phrog-mo-dang grub-mo-dang, rlung-mo-rnams) embraced ('khril-lo) the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious Padma Blood-Drinker (bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po padma'i sku-la).

And five (queens) of the northern direction, namely, Agnāyī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Bhujanā, and Varuṇānī (me-mo-dang phag-mo-dang rgan-byed-mo-dang sna-chen-mo-dang chu-lha-mo-rnams) embraced ('khril-lo) the body of the transcendent lord, the great glorious universal Karma Blood-Drinker (bcom-ldan-'das dpal khrag-'thung chen-po kun-tu las-kyi sku-la).

[iv. The fourth subdivision (of the eradication of the proud spirits through the enlightened activity of wrath) concerns the emanation of the maṇḍala of the retinue (of these wrathful deities).]

It has five parts.

[The first concerns the sexual union with these emanations (i.e. Īśvarī; it comments on Ch. 15.24):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

One would expect kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa consistently to place the Tathāgata or Buddha Heruka at the centre. Here, however, he clearly indicates the central position of the Vajra Heruka, with Buddha Heruka or Che-mchog in the east. Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 381, has Vajra Heruka in the centre and Tathāgata Heruka in the east.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.24]

... Then these maṇḍalas of wrathful deities, transcendent lords and great joyous ones, uttered the syllable HŪṂ, whereby the assembled lotus-maṇḍalas (of those queens) tightened, and they closely embraced. [24] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor de-dag-gis / HŪṂ-zhes brjod-pas / padma'i dkyil-'khor-kyi tshogs bsdus-nas shin-tu bcum-par gyur-to / [24]

Commentary:

[iv. The fourth subdivision (of the eradication of the proud spirits through the enlightened activity of wrath) concerns the emanation of the maṇḍala of the retinue (of these wrathful deities).]

It has five parts.

[The first concerns the sexual union with these emanations (i.e. Īśvarī;

it comments on Ch. 15.24):]

Then (de-nas) these maṇḍalas of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor de-dag-gis) of the five enlightened families of Blood-Drinkers, the transcendent lords and great joyous ones (bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po) uttered the syllable HŪṀ whereby (Hūṃ-zhes brjod-pas) the assembled lotus-maṇḍalas (padma'i dkyil-'khor-kyi tshogs) or vaginas of those mighty queens tightened (bsdus) around the penises (vajra) of the five Blood Drinkers, their arms and legs mutually entwined; and the upper and lower parts of their bodies closely embraced (shin-tu bcum-par-gyur), so that their bliss became extensive.

[The second section concerns the emanation of the Mātarīs. (It comments on Ch. 15.25):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.25]

... Then with Joy, they uttered (the syllable) HA, so that from the cloud of their "enlightened mind" (seminal fluids) there came forth the host of Gaurī, the host of Caurī, the host of Pramohā, the host of Vetālī, the host of Pukkāsī, the host of Caṇḍālī, the host of Ghasmarī, and the host of Śmaśānī, each with their respective hand-implements and wonder. And having come forth, these assumed their terrifying forms with their respective hand-implements in a circle, starting from the eastern direction, at the radial points of the (maṇḍala) circle of the great blazing (Herukas). [25] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas dgyes-te HA-zhes brjod-pas / byang-chub sems-kyi sprin-las /
dkar-mo'i tshogs-dang / rkun-mo'i tshogs-dang / rmongs-mo'i tshogs-dang
/ thal-byed-ma'i tshogs-dang / spos-mo'i tshogs-dang / gtum-mo'i tshogs-
dang / sme-sha-can-gyi tshogs-dang / ma-tshogs ma'i tshogs-rnams rang-
rang-gi lag-cha-dang / ngo-mtshar-dang-bcas-nas 'thon-to / 'thon-nas-
kyang 'bar-ba chen-po'i 'khor-lo'i rtsibs-mchan shar-phyogs-nas 'khor-bar
'jigs-pa'i gzugs rang-gi lag-cha-dang-bcas-nas 'khod-do / [25]

Commentary:

[The second section concerns the emanation of the Mātarīs. (It comments on Ch. 15.25):]

Then with joy they uttered the syllable HA so that (de-nas sgyes-te ha-zhes brjod-pas) from the cloud of the "enlightened mind" (byang-chub sems-kyi-sprin-las) of those male and female consorts, i.e. the (seminal-

fluid or) causal basis, there came forth ('thon-to) from the secret centres of the Īsvaris: the host (tshogs-dang) of Gaurī (dkar-mo'i)—she who performs the rites of pacification with pure Buddha-mind.

Now, although one member of this host emerged from each of the twenty-eight mighty queens, there is no defect in the number (of deities) being excessive because they are gathered in the single family of Gauri. The remaining (seven Mātārīs) also have similar (retinues).[1]

Also, if you think that there is a contradiction because the Mātārīs emerge in this context from the secret centres of the mighty queens, and during means for attainment they emerge from the union of the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families, there is no defect. Formerly when the proud spirits were disciplined, the Mātārīs purposefully appeared in this manner. Subsequently, however, when (the maṇḍala) is experientially cultivated, they accord with their description in the means for attainment.[2]

There also came forth the host of Caurī (rkun-mo'i tshogs-dang), who perform rites of subjugation because they amass an accumulation of enlightened attributes, the host of Pramohā (rmongs-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of wrath by causing amnesia because they are without duality of renunciation and acceptance, the host of Vetālī (thal-byed-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of wrath because they pulverise disharmonious aspects, the host of Pukkāsī (sbos-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of enrichment because they are full of enlightened attributes, the host of Caṇḍālī (gtum-mo'i tshogs) who perform rites of wrath because they are aggressive and quarrelsome, the host of Ghasmarī (sme-sha-can-gyi tshogs) who perform all kinds of rite because they accomplish anything whatsoever, and the host of Śmaśānī (ma-tshogs-ma'i tshogs-rnams) or Mātārī who perform rites of enrichment because they increase the lifespan and one's utilities.[3]

Each of them was endowed with (dang bcas-nas) their respective hand-implements (rang-rang-gi lag-cha) including: human clubs (zhing-dbyug) and bows and arrows, and (dang) with light rays and ornaments of wonder (ngo-mtshar). And having come forth ('thon-nas-kyang), these assumed ('khod-do) their terrifying forms ('jigs-pa'i gzugs) with their respective hand-implements (rang-gi lag-cha dang-bcas-nas) in a (bar) clockwise circle ('khor) at the radial-points of the (maṇḍala) circle of the great blazing ('bar-ba chen-po 'khor-lo'i rtsibs-mchan-nas) Herukas, starting from (nas) the south-eastern (shar) direction (phyogs). Actually, there are four at the radial points and four in the corners or angles (between them).[4]

[The third concerns the emanation of the Piśācīs. (It comments on Ch. 15.26):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit.. p. 382. The host of each of the eight

Mātārī numbers twenty-eight.

[2]:

in Ch. 17 below, which concerns the visualisation of the wrathful deities, and in works of practical instruction, such as Karma gLing-pa's bar-do thos-grol, there is no reference to the emergence of the Mātārīs from the union of Herukas and īśvarīs.

[3]:

For an explanation of the eight Mātārīs as the mudrās of the eight sensory locations (gnas-kyi phyag-rgya brgyad), i. e., the eight aggregates of consciousness, see below, p. 1170. Also see above, pp. 394-395.

[4]:

I.e. Gaurī in the east, Caurī in the south, Pramohā in the west, Vetālī in the north, Pukkāsī in the south-east, Caṇḍālī in the south-west, Ghasmarī in the north-west, and Śmaśānī in the north-east.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.26]

... Then with extreme joy they uttered the syllable HE, so that there came forth the host of great Siṃhamukhī, the host of great Vyāghramukhī, the host of great Śṛgālamukhī, the host of great Śvānamukhī, the host of great Ṛdhamukhī, the host of great Kaṅkamukhī, the host of great Kākamukhī, and the host of great Ulūkamukhī, each with their respective hand-implements and wondrous guise. And having come forth, they assumed their positions with an awesome glare in a circle from the eastern direction, outside the circle of the great blazing ones. [26] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas shin-tu dgyes-nas HE-zhes brjod-pas / seng-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / stag-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / va-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / khyi-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / bzhad-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / kang-ka'i gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / dur-bya'i gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang / 'ug-pa'i gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang bcas-par-nams / rang-rang-gi lag-cha-dang ngo-mtshar-du chas-nas 'thon-par gyur-to / 'thon-nas-kyang 'bar-ba chen-po'i 'khor-lo'i phyi-rol shar-phyogs-nas 'khor-bar rngam-pa'i mdangs-kyis 'khod-do / [26]

Commentary:

[The third concerns the emanation of the Piśācīs. (It comments on Ch. 15.26):]

Then with extreme Joy they uttered the syllable HA so that (de-nas shin-tu dgyes-nas ha-zhes brjod-pas) there came forth ('thon-par gyur-to) the host of great Siṃhamukhī (seng-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of enrichment because they are overwhelming, the host of great Vyaghramukhī (stag-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of wrath because they are endowed with heroism, excellent and fierce, the host of great Śṛgālamukhī (ya-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of wrath because they subdue the demon of the components and are learned in skillful means, the host of great Śvānamukhī (khyi-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform all kinds of rites because they subdue the deceitful Māras and are learned in keeping watch, the host of great Ḡṛdhramukhī (bzhad-gdong chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of enrichment, unimpeded in all that is knowable, because they are sharp-eyed, the host of great Kaṅkamukhī (kang-ka'i chen-mo'i tshogs-dang) who perform rites of pacification, subduing the demon of the lord of death, because they enjoy lifeless corpses, the host of great Kākamukhī (dur-bya'i gdong chen-mo'i tshogs) who perform rites of subjugation without having to renounce anything because they are liberated in reality without abandoning saṃsāra, and the host of great Ulūkamukhī ('ug-pa'i gdong chen-mo'i tshogs dang-bcas-pa rnam) who perform rites of pacification, visually observing saṃsāra because they see through darkness.

They too are endowed with their respective hand-implements (rang-rang-gi lag-cha) and wondrous guise (-dang ngo-mtshar-du chas-nas). For example, they press corpses to their mouths with folded arms, and look upon them.

And having come forth ('thon-nas-kyang), they assumed their positions with an awesome glare (rngam-pa'i mdangs-kyis 'khod-do) in a circle ('khor-bar), starting from the eastern direction (shar-phyogs-nas) outside the circle of the great blazing ones ('bar-ba chen-po'i 'khor-lo'i phyi-rol), with the four canine deities in the four cardinal directions and the four winged deities in the four Intervening directions.[1]

[The fourth concerns the emanation of the four female gatekeepers. (It comments on Ch. 15.27):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. Siṃhamukhī in the east. Vyāghramukhī in the south, Śṛgālamukhī in the west, Śvānamukhī in the north, Ḡṛdhramukhī in the south-east, Kaṅkamukhī in the south-west, Kākamukhī in the north-west, and Ulūkamukhī in the northeast.

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... Then with extreme joy they filled all the fields of the ten directions without exception, and uttered the syllable PHAṬ, so that there came forth the host of Vajratejasī, the host of Vajrāmoghā [/ Vajramukhī], the host of Vajralokā, and the host of Vajravetālī, with their respective hand-implements and wonder. And having come forth, these took their position with an extremely awesome form at the gates of the blazing maṇḍala. [27]

...

[Tibetan]

de-nas shin-tu dgyes-pas phyogs-bcu'i zhing ma-lus-par khyab-nas PHAṬ-ces brjod-pas / rdo-rje sring-gro-ma'i tshogs-dang / rdo-rje gdong-mo'i tshogs-dang / rdo-rje 'jig-rten-ma'i tshogs-dang / rdo-rje ro-langs-ma'i tshogs-rnams rang-rang-gi lag-cha-dang / ngo-mtshar-du chas-nas 'thon-par gyur-to / 'thon-nas-kyang 'bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor-gyi sgor shin-tu rngam-pa'i gzugs-kyis gnas-so / [27]

Commentary:

[The fourth concerns the emanation of the four female gatekeepers. (It comments on Ch. 15.27):]

Then with extreme Joy (de-nas shin-tu dgyes-pas) they filled all fields of the ten directions without exception (phyogs-bcu'i zhing ma-lus-par-khyab) with the great appearance of their pristine cognition, and (nas) they uttered the syllable PHAṬ so that (phaṭ-ces brjod-pas) there came forth ('thon-par gyur-to) the host of Vajratejast (rdo-r.le Bring-' gro-ma-'i tshogs-dang) who has a horse-head, the host of Vajrāmoghā [/ Vajramukhī] (rdo-rje gdong-mo'i tshogs) who has a sow-head, the host of Vajralokā (rdo-rje 'jig-rten-ma'i tshogs) who has a bear-head, and the host of Vajravetālī (rdo-rje ro-langs-ma'i tshogs-rnams) who has a wolf-head, symbolising respectively that they act of behalf of living beings through the four immeasurables and that they subdue the four erroneous views and the four demons or Māras.[1]

These are endowed with (-du-bcas-nas) their respective handimplements (rang-rang-gi lag-cha), namely the iron hook, the lasso, the iron chain, and the bell, and (dang) with ornaments of 80 wonder (ngo-mtshar).[2]

And having come forth ('thon-nas-kyang), these took up their positions with an extremely awesome and venomous form (shin-tu rngam-pa'i gzugs-kyis gnas-so) at the four gates of the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-gyi sgor) of the great blazing ('bar) Herukas.

[The fifth part concerns the expulsion of these retainues to their respective abodes. (It comments on Ch. 15.28):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the "four erroneous views and four demons", see above, note 59. In the case of Vajrāmoghā (rdo-rje don-yod), there is the alternative reading Vajramukhī (rdo-rje gdong-mo). For Vajratejasī (rdo-rje sring-gro-ma) an alternative reading, Vajrabhagavati, is possible.

[2]:

Note that these hand-implements are identical to those held by the female gatekeepers of the peaceful maṇḍala. See above. Ch. 8, p. 733.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.28]

... Then, derived from that cloud of joy, they chanted the syllable PHAṬ throughout the ten directions so that they all grew wrathful, and all the Mātaris then again were instantaneously dispatched to their particular and respective abodes. [28] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas dgyes-pa'i sprin-las phyogs-bcu-nas PHAṬ-ces bsgrags-pas /
thams-cad khros-nas ma-mo thams-cad-kyang rang-rang-gi gnas gal-ba-der
yud-tsam-gyis phyin-par bkye'o / [28]

Commentary:

[The fifth part concerns the expulsion of these retinues to their respective abodes. (It comments on Ch. 15.28):]

Then (de-nas) the male and female consorts and their retinues, derived from that cloud of joy (dgyes-pa'i sprin-las) chanted the syllable PHAṬ throughout the ten directions (phyogs-bcu-nas phat-ces bsgrags) without exception so that (-pas) their compassion became awesome and they all grew wrathful (thams-cad khros). Then all the Mātaris (-nas ma-mo thams-cad) who embraced the Buddha-bodies and were arrayed as their retinue again (kyang) were instantaneously (yud-tsam-gyis) dispatched (phyin-par bkye'o) through miraculous ability to their particular and respective abodes (rang-rang-gi gnas gal-ba der), just as they had previously emerged from them.[1]

[The Injunctions Imparted to the Proud Spirits After Being Taken Into the Fold Through Spirituality (530.2-534.4):]

The third section (of the detailed exegesis of this training—see p. 1108) concerns the injunctions imparted to (these proud spirits) after being taken

into the fold through spirituality. It has four parts, namely: a teaching on the vision of the maṇḍala which (the proud spirits) had on being ejected to their appropriate locations; their subjugation which occurred equally throughout all chiliocosms; the acceptance of the proud spirits as subjects; and the empowerments and injunctions which were subsequently imparted to them.

[i. This has three subdivisions, among which (the first) concerns the causal basis or meditative absorption in contemplation, and the secret mantras which are consequently recited. (It comments on Ch. 15.29):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. the abodes of sensory location. See above, note 76.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.29]

... Then all these transcendent lords, great joyous ones, or great glorious Blood Drinkers became absorbed in the contemplation called "the emergence of nectar through great spirituality"; and then these following (mantras) emerged from their indestructible body, speech and mind: OM̐ VAJRA MAHĀMṚTA MAHĀKRODHA AM̐ AM̐ AM̐. [29] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po dpal khrag-'thung chen-po de-dag kun thugs-rje chen-po bdud-rtsi 'byung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas / sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las 'di-dag phyung-ngo / OM̐ VAJRA MAHĀMṚTA MAHĀKRODHA AM̐ AM̐ AM̐ / [29]

Commentary:

[The Injunctions Imparted to the Proud Spirits After Being Taken Into the Fold Through Spirituality (530.2-534.4):]

The third section (of the detailed exegesis of this training—see p. 1108) concerns the injunctions imparted to (these proud spirits) after being taken into the fold through spirituality. It has four parts, namely: a teaching on the vision of the maṇḍala which (the proud spirits) had on being ejected to their appropriate locations; their subjugation which occurred equally throughout all chiliocosms; the acceptance of the proud spirits as subjects; and the empowerments and injunctions which were subsequently imparted to them.

[i. This has three subdivisions, among which (the first) concerns the causal basis or meditative absorption in contemplation, and the secret mantras which are consequently recited. (It comments on Ch. 15.29):]

Then (de-nas) all these (de-dag kun) transcendent lords (bcom-ldan-'das), the great joyous ones (dgyes-pa chen-po), or the five enlightened families of great glorious Blood Drinkers (dpal khrag-'thung chen-po), who take living beings into their fold, became absorbed (snyoms-par zhugs) from the expanse of reality in the contemplation called "emergence of nectar (bdud-rtsi 'byung-ba zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la) through great (chen-po) naturally present spirituality" (thugs-rje), which cures the sickness of those to be trained. Then these following (mantras) emerged from their indestructible body, speech and mind (-nas sku-dang gsung-dang thugs rdo-rje-las 'di-dag phyung-ngo): oṃ VAJRA MAHĀMRTA which means "great nectar of indestructible reality"; MAHĀKRODHA which means "great wrathful deity"; and Aṃ Aṃ Aṃ which signify that empowerment is thrice conferred.

[The second concerns the reemergence of the proud spirits from that (wrathful maṇḍala), and their ablution. (It comments on Ch. 15.30):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.30]

... So saying, all the Maheśvara spirits and so forth were expelled from the bowels of these transcendent lords or great wrathful deities. They were immersed in an ocean of unclean mire, and then Ucchuśmakrodha emerged from the bowels, and, drinking all the mire, caused them to regain mindfulness. [30] ...

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / dbang-phyug chen-po la-sogs-pa thams-cad / bcom-ldan-'das khro-bo chen-po de-dag-gi snam-nas bton-nas / mi-gtsang-ba'i 'dam-gyi rgya-mtshor chud-pa-las snam-nas u-tshu-śma kro-ddha phyung-nas 'dam kun 'thungs-te dran-pa slar-rnyed-nas / [30]

Commentary:

[The second concerns the reemergence of the proud spirits from that (wrathful maṇḍala), and their ablution. (It comments on Ch. 15.30):]

So saying (zhes-brjod-pas), all the Maheśvara spirits and so forth (dbang-phyug chen-po la-sogs-pa thams-cad) whose flesh had formerly been eaten and consumed were expelled from the bowels (snam-nas bton-to), through the "lower door" of these (de-dag-gi) five enlightened families of the transcendent lords, the great wrathful deities (bcom-ldan-'das khro-bo chen-po). They were immersed in an ocean of unclean mire (mi-gtsang-ba'i 'dam-gyi rgya-mtshor chud-pa) including excrement (dri-chen), and then (las), in order that they might be purified, the wrathful deity Ucchuṣmakrodha emerged from the bowels (snam-nas u-cuṣma kro-ddha phyung) of the different wrathful deities. Then, drinking all the (kun 'thungs-te) unclean mire ('dam), he caused those proud spirits to regain mindfulness (dran-pa slar rnyed-nas).[1]

Ucchuṣmakrodha is the wrathful deity known (in Tibetan) as rme-ba brtsegs-pa, "mound of impurity". He is so called because, in addition to expelling the mire from the bowels, he drinks the mire.

[The third concerns the visage of the maṇḍala of blazing deities which was then revealed. (It comments on Ch. 15.31):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

There are Sādhana dedicated to this deity in bsTan-'gyur. e.g., T. 3743.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.31]

... Then, all these hosts of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities were indeed seen to be present in an expanse of great blazing Buddha-body, with nine hundred heads, one thousand eight-hundred arms, and eight hundred legs. [31] ...

[Tibetan]

khro-bo'i dkyil-khor-gyi tshogs de-dag thams-cad-kyang dbu-dgu-brgya phyag stong-brgyad-brgya / zhabs brgyad-brgya / sku 'bar-ba chen-po'i klong-dkyil-na bzhugs-par mthong-ngo / [31]

Commentary:

[The third concerns the visage of the maṇḍala of blazing deities which was then revealed. (It comments on Ch. 15.31):]

Then (-nas) all these (de-dag thams-cad) cloudlike hosts (tshogs) of the

maṇḍala of wrathful deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor-gyi), along with the female consorts of the five enlightened families, were indeed (kyang) seen to be present in an expanse (klong-dkyil-na bzhugs-par mthong-ngo) of great blazing ('bar-ba chen-po'i) flames of Buddha-body (sku) and pristine cognition, with nine hundred heads, one thousand eight hundred arms and eight hundred legs (dbu dgu-brgya phyag stong-brgyad-brgya zhabs brgyad-brgya), to symbolise that each of the five pristine cognitions and four kinds of enlightened activity respectively represents the Hundred Authentic Families (of Buddhas). This is indeed the vision of truth which is beheld in the contemplation of the inconceivable and spontaneous Original Buddha (Samantabhadra).[1]

[ii. This concerns the subjugation (of these proud spirits) which occurred equally throughout the chlliocosms. (It comments on Ch. 15.32):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The Hundred Authentic Families (dam-pa rigs-brgya) are those of the forty-two peaceful deities and the fifty-eight wrathful deities combined. The symbolic number of nine-hundred heads corresponds to the nine-hundred attributes, when each of these deities assumes the ye-shes lnga and the phrin-las bzhi.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.32]

... At this time, the skillful means which train all the proud Maheśvaras in all the existences of the ten directions of the six world systems manifested diversely and were inconceivably different. But their subjugation occurred simultaneously. [32] ...

[Tibetan]

de'i dus-su 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i srid-pa kun-tu dregs-pa'i dbang-phyug thams-cad 'dul-ba'i thabs sna-tshogs bsam-gyis mi-khyab-par so-sor snang-bas dus-gcig-tu btul-lo / [32]

Commentary:

[ii. This concerns the subjugation (of these proud spirits) which occurred equally throughout the chlliocosms. (It comments on Ch. 15.32):]

At this time (de'i dus-su) when the miraculous array of self-manifesting pristine cognition occurred by itself in Akaniṣṭha, the display of the skillful means which train ('dul-ba'i thabs) each of all the proud Maheśvaras

(dregs-pa'i dbang-phyug chen-po thams-cad) according to their needs, in all (kun-tu) the three existences of the ten directions of the six world systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu'i srid-pa), was manifested (snang) diversely (sna-tshogs) and its particulars were visible in inconceivably (bsam-gyis mi-khyab-par) different (so-sor) world-systems, zenith and nadir. But (-pas) for those who were subjected to this training, their subjugation occurred simultaneously (dus-gcig-tu btul-lo) without temporal sequence. Accordingly, whatever appears in the spontaneous self-manifesting Bounteous Array is demonstrably manifest to others throughout the ten directions.[1]

[iii. This concerns the acceptance of the proud spirits as subjects.]

[It has four aspects, of which the first is the oath of allegiance which they make as subjects and the offering which they obsequiously make of themselves as seats in the maṇḍala. (It comments on Ch. 15.33):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the relationship between this subjugation within the self-manifest maṇḍala and its extraneous or emanational appearances, see the argument outlined above, pp. 10831095.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.33]

... Then these (spirits) trembled greatly, and in fear, with a most lamentable howl they swore an oath that they would become subjects, saying, "Let me be your subject. Let me be your subject. If I do not remain an earnest subject, tear my heads and body in a hundred pieces. Break my heart too and cut it up. Burn my putrid decomposing (body) and cast it away. And let me fall into hell. I beseech you!" Then they took up their positions as the seats of the maṇḍala. [33] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-dag shin-tu 'dar-zhing bred-pas rab-tu zhum-pa'i nga-ros /
'bangs-su-mchi / 'bangs-su-mchi /
'bangs-su nan-tan ma-brgyis-na /
mgo-dang lus-ni brgyar 'gas-shing /
snying yang-'gas-shing gtubs-gyur-cig /
rul-myags tshig-nas brlag-pa-dang /
dmyal-bar ltung-nas 'bod-par-shog /
—ces 'bangs-su mchi-bar mna'-bor-nas / dkyil-'khor-gyi gdan-du bzhag-
go / [33]

Commentary:

[iii. This concerns the acceptance of the proud spirits as subjects.]

[It has four aspects, of which the first is the oath of allegiance which they make as subjects and the offering which they obsequiously make of themselves as seats in the maṇḍala. (It comments on Ch. 15.33):]

Once that miraculous display (of the maṇḍala) had been arrayed, then (de-nas) these (de-dag) proud spirits were terrified. Their bodies trembled greatly (shin-tu 'dar), and (zhing) in fear (bred-pas) with a most lamentable (rab-tu zhum) and fervent howl (nga-ros) they swore an oath that they would become subjects, saying (-ces 'bangs-su mchi-bar mna'-'bor-nas), "Let me be the subject ('bangs-su mchi) of your body. Let me be the subject ('bangs-su mchi) of your speech. If I do not remain an earnest subject ('bangs-su nan-tan ma-bgyis-na) of your mind, tear my heads and body in a hundred pieces (mgo-dang lus-ni brgyar-gshags-shing). Break ('gas) my heart too (snying-yang) into a hundred thousand pieces and cut it up (-shing gtubs gyur-cig). Burn (tshig) my body with fire having cursed it to be putrid and decomposing (rul-myags) and (nas) then cast it away (brlag-pa) in this life. And let me fall Into hell (-dang dmyal-bar lhung-nas) in the next life. "I beseech you ('bod-par shog) to help!" Then (nas) in their respective bodies they took up their positions (bzhag-go) as the seats of the maṇḍala (dkyil-khor-gyi gdan-du) of the five enlightened families of wrathful deities.

[The second aspect concerns the offering of their retainers, which they make with bowed heads. (It comments on Ch. 15.34):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.34]

... They all said yet again with one voice:
Please accept our wives.
Mothers, sisters, and daughters
Within the great maṇḍala.
Please accept them, heroic lord of Gods.
Let all our respective retinues
Maintain only the name
Of this great assembled maṇḍala—
Indeed, as our blazing crown jewels,
May we adopt you with an attitude
Which is without deceit but respectful.
And then remainins on our crowns.
Let us venerate you.

Let us perfectly accomplish without exception
Whatever may be the purpose of those (in the maṇḍala). [34] ...

[Tibetan]

thams-cad-kyis mgrin gcig-tu yang-smras-pa /
bdag-cag-rnams-kyi mchis-brang-dang /
ma-dang sring-mo bu-mo-rnams /
dkyil-'khor chen-por bzhes-su gsol /
dpa'-bo lha-rje bzhes-su-gsol /
bdag-cag so-so 'khor-bcas-kyis /
tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor chen-po 'di'i /
ming-tsam 'dzin-par byed-pa-yang /
gtsug-gi nor-bu 'bar-ba-ltar /
gYo-sgyu-med-cing gus-ldan-pa'i /
sems-kyis blangs-te spyi-bo-yi /
gtsug-tu bzhas-ste bkur-bar bgyi /
de-yi dgos-pa ci-yang-rung /
ma-lus rdzogs-par bdag-cag sgrub / [34]

Commentary:

[The second aspect concerns the offering of their retainers, which they make with bowed heads. (It comments on Ch. 15.34):]

All (thams-cad-kyis) the proud spirits yet again said with one voice (mgrin-gcig-tu yang smra-pa): Please accept (bzhes-su gsol) our wives, mothers, sisters and daughters (bdag-cag-rnams-kyi mchis-brang-dang ma-dang sring-mo bu-mo-rnams) within the great maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor chen-por) enjoyed by the assembled wrathful deities. Please accept them (bzhes-su gsol) with certainty, heroic (dpa'-bo) subduer of venomous spirits, lord (rje) and supreme refuge of the gods (lha) who takes us into your fold. Let all our respective retainers (bdag-cag so-so 'khor-bcas-kyis) be creatures who maintain only the name of this great assembled maṇḍala (tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor chen-po 'di'i ming-tsam 'dzin-par byed-pa) of visible wrathful deities. indeed (yang), as (ltar) the crown (gtsug-gi) of our heads is venerated by the blazing ('bar-ba) light of wish-fulfilling jewels (nor-bu), may we adopt (blangs-te) you as an object of offerings, with an attitude (sems-kyis) without deceit (gYo-sgyu-med) but respectful (-cing gus-ldan-pa'i). Then, remaining (bzhas-ste) for ever on the crowns (gtsug-tu) of our heads, let us (-bar bgyi) venerate (bkur) and serve you. Let us perfectly accomplish (rdzogs-par bdag-cag bsgrub) all your aspirations without exception (ma-lus), whatever (ci-yang-rung) of the four kinds of enlightened activity may be the desired aim or purpose (dgos-pa) of those (de-yi) in the maṇḍala who bear the symbolic implements.

[The third aspect concerns the ritual assistance which they provide with an oath of allegiance. (It comments on Ch. 15.35):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.35]

... And they said:

If here in the presence of these heroic ones

We do not do as we have said.

May our heads, bodies and hearts

Be broken, cut, and decompose in pieces. [35] ...

[Tibetan]

gal-te dpa'-bo'i spyan-snga 'dir /
smras-pa bzhin-du ma-bsgrubs-na /
bdag-cag-rnams-kyi mgo lus snying /
bkas-gtubs dum-bur rul-bar mchi /
—zhes smras-so / [35]

Commentary:

[The third aspect concerns the ritual assistance which they provide with an oath of allegiance. (It comments on Ch. 15.35):]

And they said (zhes smras-so). "If here in the presence of these heroic ones (gal-te dpa'-bo 'i spyan-snga 'dir) we do not do as we have said (smras-pa bzhin-du ma-bsgrubs-na) in the oath of allegiance which we have taken, may our heads, bodies and hearts (bdag-cag-kyi mgo-lus-snying) be broken (bkas) into bits, cut (gtubs) with instruments of exorcism, and made to decompose in pieces (dum-bur rul-bar mchi).

[The fourth aspect concerns the request made by the mighty queens for enlightened activities which they might obey on becoming subjects. (It comments on Ch. 15.36):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.36]

... Then the host of their wives, and all the hosts of their mothers, sisters and daughters instantly arrived in the maṇḍala, and they all spoke as follows with one voice:

May all the hosts of our retinues in their entirety

Become the subjects of the great heroic ones.

May the treat heroic ones grant (injunctions) to us

Concerning the accomplishment of their rites.

Thus they spoke. [36] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-dag-gi chung-ma'i tshogs-dang / ma-dang sring-mo-dang /
bu-mo'i tshogs thams-cad dkyil-'khor-du yud-tsam-gyis 'ongs-nas / thams-
cad-kyis mgrin-gcig-tu smras-pa /
bdag-cag 'khor-tshogs thams-cad kun /
dpa'-bo chen-po'i 'bangs-su mchi /
dpa'-bo chen-pos bdag-cag-la /
las-kyi dngos-grub stsal-du gsol /
—zhes smras-so / [36]

Commentary:

[The fourth aspect concerns the request made by the mighty queens for enlightened activities which they might obey on becoming subjects. (It comments on Ch. 15.36):]

Then (de-nas) the host of the wives of these (de-dag-gi chung-ma'i tshogs) proud spirits, and all the hosts of their mothers, sisters and daughters (-dang ma-dang sring-mo-dang bu-mo'i tshogs thams-cad), who had previously been dispatched, once more arrived Instantly in the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-du yud-tsam = gyis 'ongs) of wrathful deities, and they all spoke as follows with one voice (-nas thams-cad-kyis mgrin-gcig-ti smras-ba): "May all the hosts of our retinues in their entirety (bdag-cag 'khor-tshogs thams-cad kun) become subjects of the great heroic ones (dpa'-bo chen-po'i 'bangs-su mchi) who subdue the armies of obstructing demons, and thereupon, may the great heroic ones (dpa'-bo chen-pos) grant (stsal-du gsol) injunctions to us (bdag-cag-la) concerning the accomplishment of their rites (las-kyi dngos-grub), that we may act according to the rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath, and in accordance with our own respective past deeds. Thus they spoke (zhes-smras-so).

[iv. The fourth part concerns the empowerments and injunctions subsequently Imparted to the proud spirits. (It comments on Ch. 15.37):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.37]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, presented the vajra into their hands and conferred the name empowerment. Then they were arrayed in the outermost (area) of the maṇḍala. [37]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos lag-tu rdo-rje byin-nas ming-gi dbang-bskur-te dkyil-'khor-gyi phyi-rol-du bkod-do / [37]

Commentary:

[iv. The fourth part concerns the empowerments and injunctions subsequently Imparted to the proud spirits. (It comments on Ch. 15.37):]

Then the Transcendent Lord (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das), Che-mchog, the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos), for the sake of living beings, presented the vajra into their hands (lag-tu rdo-rje byin), and (nas) conferred the empowerment (dbang-bskur-te) of (-gi) name (ming) respectively on them—Vajramanurākṣaṣī and so on.[1] Then they were arrayed (bkod-do) successively in (-du) the outer courtyard, the outermost (phyi-rol) area of the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-gyi) of blazing deities, their positions being allocated in accordance with their respective rites.[2]

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 15.38):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Vajra is added to the names of the twenty-eight Īśvarīs to indicate that they have been transformed and encorporated [incorporated?] into the wrathful enlightened maṇḍala. In rdo-rde me-long, their respective mantras are listed with the prefix vajra, but cf. Ch. 16, p. 1155, for an alternative description without the prefix. On the "name empowerment" (ming-gi dbang-bskur), see also above. Ch. 9. note 76.

[2]:

I.e., those associated with rites of pacification are in the east, those with enrichment in the south, those with subjugation in the west, and those with wrath in the north.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 15.38]

This completes the fifteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Cloud-like Emanation of the Natural Maṇḍala of the Wrathful Deities. [38]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las khro-bo rang-bzhin-gyi dkyil-'khor sprin rnam-par spros-pa'i le'u-ste bco-lnga-pa'o / [38]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 15.38):]

This completes (-o) the exegesis of the fifteenth chapter (le'u ste bco-lnga-ba) from the (las) supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po), the pristine cognition of the display, Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyis nges-pa) nature of the Buddha-body of perfect rapture. It is entitled the great Cloud-like (sprin) primordial and spontaneous Emanation (rnam-par spros-ba'i) of the Natural Mandala (rang-bzhin-gyi dkyil-khor) of the Wrathful Deities (khro-bo) in the spontaneous Bounteous Array—self-manifesting and pervasive without extremes or centre.

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[Full title: Emanation of the Maṇḍala of Buddha-speech of the Great Assembly of Wrathful Deities]

Then the transcendent lord, the Great Joyous One, in order that these great assemblies of the maṇḍala might be accomplished by commitment, brought forth these following maṇḍalas of Buddha-speech from the awesome pristine cognition which is the indestructible body, speech and mind of those assemblies of wrathful Tathāgatas, the great Blood Drinkers, along with their queens. [1]

OM TATHĀGATA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA
SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA HANA DAHA PACA HŪṢ HŪṢ HŪṢ PHAT

OM VAJRA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ

OM RATNA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ

OM PADMA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ

OM KARMA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ

OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ SARVADUṢṬĀN HŪM
PHAṬ

OM MAHĀVAJRADHARA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ
OM MAHĀSŪRYARATNA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIDAMĀ HŪM PHAṬ

OM HREṢITASAMANTAPADMA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ KHĀHI HŪM
PHAṬ

OM SARVĀMOGHA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIŚVĀ HŪM PHAṬ [2]

OM VAJRA GAURĪ HA

OM VAJRA CAURĪ HA

OM VAJRA PRAMOHĀ HA

OM VAJRA VETĀLĪ HA

OM VAJRA CAṆḌĀLĪ HA

OM VAJRA PUKKĀSĪ HA

OM VAJRA GHAṢMARĪ HA

OM VAJRA ŚMAŚANĪ HA

OM VAJRA SIṂHAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA VYĀGHRAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA ŚRGĀLAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA ŚVĀNAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA GRḌHRAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA KAṆKAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA KĀKAMUKHĪ HE

OM VAJRA ULŪKAMUKHĪ HE [3]

OM VAJRA ĀRYATEJATEN JAḤ

OM VAJRĀMOGHĀ HŪM

OM VAJRA LOKĀ VAṂ

OM VAJRA BHASMĪ VALAYAVATĪ HOḤ [4]

BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ [5]

OM RULU RULU HŪM

EHYEHI ĀNAYA

JAḤ HŪM VAṂ HOḤ

RAṂ [6]

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HŪM [7]

OM! Wrathful deities who pacify wrathful beings,

O host of awesome glorious wrathful ones,

Grant me through your spirituality at this time

The most amazing blessing which blazes forth.

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYAS TVAṂ

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA PHAṬ
OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HOḤ [8]

ALI ULI TĀLĪ TAPĀLI
DAMṢṬRAGAṆARAUDRA
KHĀRAM YOGINĪ KHĀHI HOḤ
HŪM HĀ HE PHAṬ [9]

With these words, all the ten directions of the six world systems were burned, further burned and absolutely burned. They blazed, further blazed, and absolutely blazed. Throughout they were filled, further filled, and absolutely filled by the host of the blazing maṇḍala. [10]

This completes the sixteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real entitled the Emanation of the Maṇḍala of Buddha-Speech of the Great Assembly of Wrathful Deities. [11]

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[Commentary (534.4-543.1):]

The second part (of the maṇḍala of the wrathful deities—see p. 1075) is an extensive exegesis of the branches of its means for attainment in accordance with the path (Chs. 16-20). It has five sections, namely, the maṇḍala of mantras of Buddha-speech which arouse the continuum of Buddha-mind (Ch. 16), the maṇḍala of reflected images which are supports for visualisation (Ch. 17), the offerings which should be made to them (Ch. 18), the sequence of commitments to be kept by those who are committed (Ch. 19), and the attainment of enlightened activities by those who are committed (Ch. 20). Among these, the first is the subject matter (of this chapter). It includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.

[Overview of the Mantras of Buddha-Speech (534.6-537-3)]

The overview has ten aspects:

i. The meditation which accords with the three kinds of contemplation:

At the outset, one should cultivate an enlightened attitude; for It is said:[1]

Meditate on the contemplation of the Magical Net
In order to establish the great pride
Which tames the sufferings caused by grasping
And the three levels of vile existence.

In order to instruct venomous beings through compassion one should consider accomplishing the deeds of the buddhas and then meditate according to the three kinds of contemplation.

ii. The creation of the maṇḍala:

At the outset the celestial palace and the deities should be visually created. Corresponding to the means for attainment in this context, one visually creates the Buddha-body of Great Glorious (Che-mchog) Heruka through the five ritual steps.[2] He should be visually created within the great celestial palace of wrathful deities, which emerges through the mantra BHRUM̐ VIŚVA VIŚUDDHE, and with his retinue in the appropriate surrounding locations.

Because one's own mind is itself the Original Buddha (Samantabhadra), the Tathāgatas are said to be one's own sons; and as such the deities of the maṇḍala are visualised to emanate from the secret centres of the central deities, the male and female consorts, and then assume their respective positions. Yet, because this enlightened family does not disappear and is spontaneously present, one is also said to be the son of the tathāgatas; and as such, one is visualised emanating as a spiritual warrior of Buddha-mind, circumambulating and making obeisance to the maṇḍala, and then vanishing into the heart (of the deity).

iii. The invitation of the maṇḍala:

After reciting the verses (Ch. 9, 26) which begin:

The Great Identity of the maṇḍalas
Of the directions and times...

One invites (the maṇḍala) with the mantra (Ch. 16.6):

RULU RULU RULU HŪM̐ EHYEHI ĀNAYA JAḤ HŪM̐ VAḤ HOḤ.

iv. The scattering of the flowers of awareness:

Reciting RĀM̐, one visualises that the deities approach, and one's hands are joined in supplication.

v. The dissolving (of the mandala):

One visualises that the deities dissolve indivisibly (with oneself) through the following verses (Ch. 16.7-8):

OM̐ VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HŪM̐
OM̐! Wrathful deities who pacify wrathful beings,
O host of awesome glorious wrathful ones.
Grant me through your spirituality at this time
The most amazing blessing which blazes forth.

vi. The power which should be conferred by stabilising this and summoning the commitments:

Stability should be acquired by the mantra (Ch. 16.8):

OM̐ VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYAS TVAM̐;

Commitments are subsequently summoned by the mantra (Ch. 16.8):

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA PHAT;

And one thinks, with joy, that power is conferred by the mantra (Ch. 16.8):

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HOḤ.

vii. The offerings which are radiantly made by means of the offering of mantras:

The song of offering is accompanied by the mantra (Ch. 16.9):

ALI ULI TĀLI TAPĀLI DAMṢṢTRAGAṆARAUDRA KHARAM YOGINĪ
KHĀHI HOḤ

viii. The visualisation:

The maṇḍala of deities is visualised with the mantra (Ch. 16.9):

HŪM HA HE PHAT?

And with the verses (Ch. 17.5):

The terrifying Buddha-bodies are dark brown,
Dark blue, dark yellow...

And the deities should be pleased by the recitation of whichever secret mantras are appropriate.

ix. The offering:

A feast-offering (tshogs) should be performed once the rites of "liberation" and sexual union, nectar and the five ordinary desired attributes have been offered, as they are described in Ch. 18.[3] If there are specific rites to be performed, after the feast-offering one should commence the enlightened activity and cast out the residual tormā-offering (lhag-ma'i gtor-ma).[4]

x. The subsequent activities:

One should confess violations (of the commitments), make prayers of aspiration, beg forgiveness, dedicate (the merit), recite a benediction, and break up the supporting (material) maṇḍala, if indeed there is one.

Now, Ch. 15 concerns the natural maṇḍala of the wrathful deities. Ch. 16 concerns their maṇḍala of secret mantras. Ch. 17 concerns their maṇḍala of reflected images which are supports for visualisation. Ch. 18 concerns their skillful means of offering. Ch. 19 concerns their sequence of commitments. Ch. 20 concerns their attainment of enlightened activities; and Ch. 21 is a melodious eulogy to the wrathful deities in the form of a joyous song. These chapters completely reveal the aspects of a single maṇḍala (of wrathful deities). The means for attaining these stages in detail are described in the Holy Ornament of Appearance (P. 5 4735). where they should be examined.[5]

This overview has been presented with the thought that these rudimentary points should make the steps of actual realisation and enlightened activity easier to comprehend.

[Interlinear Commentary on the Mantras of Buddha-Speech (537-3-543.1)]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

de-kho-na-nyid snang-ba dam-pa rgyan, p. 102.3.7. On the three kinds of contemplation according to Mahāyoga, see above, pp. 679. 771. 851.

[2]:

The "five ritual steps" (cho-ga Inga) are enumerated above, pp. 850-851, under "five kinds of ritual".

[3]:

See below, pp. 1174-1183.

[4]:

See below. Ch. 20. p. 1267.

[5]:

Peking bsTan-'gyur. Vol. 83. PP. 102.2.8-103.5-1.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.1]

Then the transcendent lord, the Great Joyous One, in order that these great assemblies of the maṇḍala might be accomplished by commitment, brought forth these following maṇḍalas of Buddha-speech from the awesome pristine cognition which is the indestructible body, speech and mind of those assemblies of wrathful Tathāgatas, the great Blood Drinkers, along with their queens. [1] ...

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs chen-po 'di-dag dam-tshig-gis grub-par bya-ba'i phyir / de-bzhin gshegs-pa khro-bo khrag-'thung chen-po btsun-mo-dang bcas-pa'i tshogs de-dag-gi sku-dang gsung-dang / thugs rdo-rje ye-shes rngam-pa-las gsung-gi dkyil-'khor 'di-dag phyung-ngo / [1]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary on the Mantras of Buddha-Speech (537-3-543.1)]

The interlinear commentary has three parts, namely: a brief teaching on the emergence of the secret mantras; a detailed exegesis of the nature in which they emerge; and a synopsis or conclusion concerning their extraordinary signs.

[The first (comments on Ch. 16.1):]

Once the natural maṇḍala had been arrayed, then (de-nas) the transcendent lord (bcom-ldan-'das), the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos), in order that (phyir) these ('di-dag) great assemblies of the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs-chen-po) of wrathful deities revealed above might be accomplished by (-gis grub-par bya-ba'i) Yogins, and inasmuch as they are natural expressions of the Buddha-speech of great commitment (dam-tshig), visualised that the so-called wrathful Tathāgatas (de-bzhin-gshegs-pa khro-bo) of the self-manifesting array became compounded by the extraneous perception of Bodhisattvas and so forth, indicating that they are not dissimilar to the indestructible expanse of peaceful deities of the Buddha-body of perfect rapture. He brought forth (phyung-ngo) of his own accord these following ('di-dag) groups of mantras or maṇḍalas of Buddha-speech (gsung-gi dkyil-'khor) from the awesome (rngam-pa-las) roar of naturally present pristine cognition (ye-shes), i.e. the self-arisen natural sound of mantra equal to a thousand claps of thunder, which is the identity of the indestructible body, speech and mind (sku-dang gsung-dang thugs-rdo-rje) of those (de-dag-gi) respective assemblies (tshogs) of wrathful deities, the great Blood Drinkers (khrag-'thung chen-po) along with their (dang-bcas-pa'i) respective queens (btsun-mo).

The second part (the detailed exegesis) has five subdivisions, comprising the mantras which respectively: create the deities; invite the beings of pristine cognition; visualise them for the sake of accomplishment; scatter the flowers of awareness; and offer tormas-cakes for the sake of enlightened activity.

[i. This group of mantras is also fivefold, and its first section comprises the mantras which create the male and female central deities. (It comments on Ch. 16.2):]

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Text 16.2 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.2]

OM TATHĀGATA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA
 SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ
 OM VAJRA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
 HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ
 OM RATNA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
 HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ
 OM PADMA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
 HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ
 OM KARMA MAHĀŚRĪHERUKA MAHĀCAṆḌA SARVADUṢṬĀNTAKA
 HANA DAHA PACA HŪM HŪM HŪM PHAṬ
 OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ SARVADUṢṬĀN HŪM
 PHAṬ
 OM MAHĀVAJRADHARA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ
 OM MAHĀSŪRYARATNA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIDAMĀ HŪM PHAṬ
 OM HREṢITASAMANTAPADMA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ KHĀHI HŪM
 PHAṬ
 OM SARVĀMOGHA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIŚVĀ HŪM PHAṬ [2]

Commentary:

The second part (the detailed exegesis) has five subdivisions, comprising the mantras which respectively: create the deities; invite the beings of pristine cognition; visualise them for the sake of accomplishment; scatter the flowers of awareness; and offer torma-cakes for the sake of enlightened activity.

[i. This group of mantras is also fivefold, and its first section comprises the mantras which create the male and female central deities. (It comments on Ch. 16.2):]

Among the mantras of the male consorts, (the first) is interpreted as follows: OM is the auspicious syllable which consecrates the mantra; TATHĀGATA means "one who has passed away (to nirvāṇa)"; MAHĀ means "great"; ŚRĪ means "glorious"; HERUKA means "Blood Drinker"; MAHĀCAṆḌA means "great fierce one"; SARVADUṢṬA means "all inimical forces"; and AN TAKA means "ending". These syllables comprise the root mantra, which summons the transcendent lord. HANA means "strike" DAHA means "burn!" PACA means "cook!" HŪM HŪM HŪM means "subdue the body, speech and mind of venomous spirits"; and PHAṬ means "tear into pieces". These mantra-syllables comprise the appropriate enlightened activity.

Those of the other (Herukas) are similar to the above except that they replace (TATHĀGATA) respectively with VAJRA which means "indestructible reality"; RATNA which means "gemstone"; PADMA which, in the original (Sanskrit), means "lotus"; and KARMA which means "activity".

Among the mantras of their female consorts, (the first is interpreted as follows): OM SARVATATHĀGATA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ indicates "the Tathāgata or Buddha Krodhīśvarī"; SARVADUṢṬĀN HŪM PHAṬ means "subdue and shatter all inimical forces". As for the second, OM MAHĀVAJRADHARA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ JVĀLANĪ HŪM PHAṬ means

"holder of the vajra, great blazing mistress of wrathful deities, subdue and tear apart the venomous spirits". As for the third, OM MAHĀSŪRYARATNA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIDAMĀ means "sun among gemstones, great subduing mistress of wrathful deities!".[1] As for the fourth, OM HREṢITASAMANTAPADMA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ KHĀHI means "all-neighing lotus, great mistress of wrathful deities, eat!".[2]

[Here the root text Interpolates: There seems to be some doubt as to whether this word hreṣita corresponds to current Sanskrit usage. However, since the Sanskrit version of the Tantra is not ascertainable, in accordance with the advice of Rong-zom-pa, it has been reconstructed and rendered in translation as rgod-ma or mare].[3]

As for the fifth, OM SARVĀMOGHA MAHĀKRODHĪŚVARĪ VIŚVA means "diversified mistress of wrathful deities who accomplishes everything!".

[The second section comprises the mantras of the eight Mātariś. (It comments on Ch. 16.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

kLong-chen-pa reads VIDAMĀ (rnam-par 'joms-ma), i.e. "sub-duing". For an alternative reading, see Lo-chen Dharmaśrī. op. cit., p. 395, where rig-ma is suggested.

[2]:

Both kLong-chen-pa and Lo-chen, op. cit.. p. 395, read "all-neighing" (kun-tu rgod-pa). For an explanation of this mantra, see following paragraph.

[3]:

This section is derived from version A of the root-text. Tibetan attempts to reconstruct the Sanskrit are unclear here as on many other occasions. Lo-chen, for example, reads hrīśruta.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.3]

OM VAJRA GAURĪ HA

OM VAJRA CAURĪ HA

OM VAJRA PRAMOHĀ HA

OM VAJRA VETĀLĪ HA

OM VAJRA CAṆḌĀLĪ HA
OM VAJRA PUKKĀSĪ HA
OM VAJRA GHASMARĪ HA
OM VAJRA ŚMAŚĀNĪ HA
OM VAJRA SIṀHAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA VYĀGHRAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA ŚṚGĀLAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA ŚVĀNAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA GRDHARAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA KĀṆKAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA KĀKAMUKHĪ HE
OM VAJRA ULŪKAMUKHĪ HE [3]

Commentary:

[The second section comprises the mantras of the eight Mātarīs. (It comments on Ch. 16.3):]

These are preceded by the syllables OM VAJRA, the meanings of which have been explained above. Gaurī means "she who is white". In most texts of the past the word gaurī is interpreted as such. However it has many other meanings such as "repository", "learned", and "delighting in lotus flowers", so that it may also be translated as "repository" (mdzod-ldan).

Caurī means "she who is a thief". Pramohā means "she who is deluded". Vetālī means "she who is a zombie". Caṇḍālī means "she who is fierce". Pukkāsī means "she who is is fragrant". Ghasmarī means "eater of unclean flesh". Śmaśānī means "she who frequents charnel grounds".

The eight syllables HA are their seed-syllables. When the syllables: OM VAJRA GAURĪ JAḤ are added, the enlightened activities (of the Mātarīs) are performed; and when the syllable JAḤ is visualised, they are pleased. (Their mantras) should be known as such.

[The third section comprises the mantras of the eight Piśācīs. (It comments on Ch. 16.3):]

SIṀHAMUKHĪ means "she who is lion-faced"; VYĀGHRAMUKHĪ means "she who is tiger-faced"; ŚṚGĀLAMUKHĪ means "she who is fox-faced".

ŚVĀNAMUKHĪ means "she who is dog-faced". GRDHARAMUKHĪ means "she who is vulture-faced". KĀṆKAMUKHĪ means "she who is kite-faced". KĀKAMUKHĪ means "she who is crow-faced"; and ULŪKAMUKHĪ means "she who is owl-faced". The eight syllables HŪM are their seed-syllables. Their mantras of enlightened activity are also compounded in the previous manner (i.e. with JAḤ).

[The fourth section comprises the mantras of the four female gatekeepers. (It comments on Ch. 16.4):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.4]

OM VAJRA ĀRYATEJATEN̐ JAḤ

OM VAJRĀMOGHĀ HŪṢ

OM VAJRA LOKĀ VAṢ

OM VAJRA BHASMĪ VĀLAYAVATĪ HOḤ [4]

Commentary:

[The fourth section comprises the mantras of the four female gatekeepers. (It comments on Ch. 16.4):]

ĀRYATEJATEN̐, meaning "sublime charisma", refers to the horse-headed one (Vajratejasī); AMOGHĀ, meaning "successful", refers to the sow-faced one (Vajrāmoghā); VAJRALOKĀ, meaning "indestructible illuminator of the world", refers to the bear-faced one (Vajralokā); and BHASMĪ VĀLAYAVATĪ, meaning "turning to ashes", refers to the wolf-faced one (Vajravetālī).[1] The terminating syllables JAḤ, HŪṢ, VAṢ, and HOḤ are their respective seed-syllables.

[The fifth section comprises the mantras of the Īśvarīs or mighty queens. (It comments on Ch. 16.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

It is hard to determine correctly the Sanskrit for this set of mantras. Cf., Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., p. 396, where the first is glossed "phags-ma sring-'gro-ma-'am ring-'gro-ma". The second is interpreted by him as "gdong-mo'am don-yod-ma, showing that he is very much aware of the alternative readings—VAJRĀMOGHĀ and VAJRAMUKHĪ. In the case of the fourth, he reads BHASMĪ VĀLAYAVATU, and interprets this to mean "she who turns to ashes" (thal-bar byed-ma).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.5]

BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ
BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ BHYOḤ [5]

Commentary:

[The fifth section comprises the mantras of the Īśvarīs or mighty queens. (It comments on Ch. 16.5):]

There are twenty-eight syllables BHYOḤ, to which names such as bhaginī or "sister", and bhāryā or "wife" are combined.[1] BHYOḤ is in effect their seed-syllables. When their enlightened activities are accomplished, these syllables are added to the respective mantras, beginning with (that of Manurākṣasī): OṂ MANURĀKṢASĪ BHYOḤ DUṢṬAMĀRAYA HŪṂ PHAṬ.

[ii. As for those mantras which Invite the beings of pristine cognition. (It comments on Ch. 16.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The mantras of the twenty-eight Īśvarī are listed in rdo-rje me-long, Peking bsTan-'gyur, p. 20. without the inclusion of bhaginī or bhāryā, Lo-chen. op. cit., p. 396 gives two possible interpretations for bhārya, either "wife" or "she who causes terror."

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.6]

OṂ RULU RULU HŪṂ

EHYEHI ĀNAYA

JAḤ HŪṂ VAṂ HOḤ

RAṂ [6]

Commentary:

[ii. As for those mantras which Invite the beings of pristine cognition. (It comments on Ch. 16.6):]

OṂ RULU RULU RULU HŪṂ summons the maṇḍala to which the wrathful deities are assigned. in the past these syllables were consecrated by the Great Glorious (Heruka) as a ferocious song of commitment which he imparted to the ogres of ritual activity.[1]

EHYEHI means "come here, come here!" ĀNAYA HOḤ means "to this place". JAḤ HŪṂ VAṂ HOḤ are the syllables which summon (the deities) to act on behalf of sentient beings through the four immeasurables. RAṂ is the syllable through which the fiery forms of the being of commitment and

the being of pristine cognition, who have been Invited, become present almost side by side. bLa-ma Rong-zom-pa explains that this mantra scatters the flowers of awareness, so that oneself is realised to be indivisible in nature from the deity and non-duality is approached.[2]

[iii. As for the mantra which scatters the flowers of awareness (commenting on Ch. 16.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 397, interprets RULU as a compound of RUJ ("destroy") and LŪ ("cut off"). Tibetan las-kyi srin-po, "ogres of ritual activity" indicates the Īśvarī class of spirits who were entrusted with their rites by the Heruka. See below. Ch. 20, section 15, and its commentary, pp. 12671269.

[2]:

kLong-chen-pa and Lo-chen, pp. 396-397, concur that these mantras contribute to the descent of the ye-shes-pa, and that the function of scattering the flowers of awareness is assumed by the following mantra.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.7]

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HŪṂ [7]

Commentary:

[iii. As for the mantra which scatters the flowers of awareness (commenting on Ch. 16.7):]

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HŪṂ means "gather your commitments, O wrathful deities".

[iv. As for the prayer for accomplishment (which comments on Ch. 16.8):]

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OM! Wrathful deities who pacify wrathful beings,
O host of awesome glorious wrathful ones,
Grant me through your spirituality at this time
The most amazing blessing which blazes forth.

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYAS TVAM

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA PHAT

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HOḤ [8]

[Tibetan]

OM khro-la khros-bas zhi-mdzad-pa /
thugs-rje khro-dpal rngam-pa'i tshogs /

'bar-ba'i byin-rlabs rmad-po-che /

de-nyid-du-ni bdag-la-stsol /

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYAS TVAM /

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA PHAT /

OM VAJRA KRODHA SAMAYA HOḤ / [8]

Commentary:

[iv. As for the prayer for accomplishment (which comments on Ch. 16.8):]

OM! in addition to your self-manifesting forms, for the sake of pernicious wrathful beings (khro-la) whose activity is to be disciplined, you appear as wrathful deities (khro-bas), emanating through your disposition of spirituality (thugs-rjes) as the wrathful ones (khro) who pacify (zhi-mdzad-pa) the minds of those to be trained. O host of (-i tshogs) Herukas, exceedingly awesome (rngam-pa) and most glorious (dpal) among living beings, Grant me (bdag-la stsol) at this present time (da-nyid-du-ni) the accomplishments of Buddha-body, speech, and mind without exception; for your Buddha-body, speech and mind have the most amazing blessing which blazes forth ('bar-ba'i byin-rlabs rmad-po-che) self-manifesting forms of pristine cognition.

SAMAYAS TVAM means "confer your commitments". SAMAYA PHAT means "send forth your commitments". SAMAYA HOḤ means "these are the commitments".

[v. The mantras through which torma-offerings are made for the sake of enlightened activities (comment on Ch. 16.9):]

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ALI ULI TĀLĪ TAPĀLI
DAMṢṬRAGANĀRAUDRA
KHĀRAM YOGINĪ KHĀHI HOḤ
HŪM HĀ HE PHAṬ [9]

Commentary:

[v. The mantras through which tormas-offerings are made for the sake of enlightened activities (comment on Ch. 16.9):]

ALI and ULI are food and drink respectively. TĀLĪ and TAPĀLI are respective branches of these.[1] DAMṢṬRAGANĀRAUDRA means "canine host of indestructible wrath". KHĀRAM YOGINĪ KHĀHI HOḤ means "eat! O host of Yoginīs, with your faces ablaze".[2] While one visualises that they partake (of the offerings), the syllables HŪM HĀ HE PHAṬ are recited to the maṇḍala of thirty deities.[3]

One should also be aware at this point that these secret mantras were not translated into Tibetan because they are the solemn words of the speaker, through which accomplishment is to be attained. If they had been translated, their recitation would confer no accomplishment. This is because the Tibetan language was not consecrated in ancient times by speakers of the secret mantras. There is no defect even for one who does not know how the different languages correlate. For, when one recites these mantras with one-pointed faith and devotion, the great accomplishments will appropriately emerge. However, if one does know how to juxtapose the (Sanskrit and Tibetan) vocabulary, there are indeed benefits. One who understands both word and meaning manages to retain the meaning and is undeluded with respect to word.[4]

[The third part (of this chapter) is the synopsis or conclusion concerning the extraordinary signs (associated with these mantras. It comments on Ch. 16.10):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Lo-chen interprets these mantras as follows: ALI is drink, ale in particular, ULI is food, meat in particular. TĀLĪ and TAPĀLI are sacramental substances including grains and fruit. According to Lilāvajra, 'grel-pa spar-khab. p. 189, TALI means fruits and TAPALI means various chewables (bca'-ba sna-tshogs). kLong-chen-pa agrees with the latter in his interpretation of ALI and ULI.

[2]:

Lo-chen, p. 398, interprets KHĀRAM as "harsh" (stob-pa), rather than "with faces ablaze" (zhal 'bar-ba).

[3]:

I.e. these offerings are made to the Herukas, Krodhīśvarī, Mātari, and Piśācī, but not to the twenty-eight Īśvarī.

[4]:

On the nature of the seed-syllables and the efficacy of reciting mantras, see above Chs. 4-5.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.10]

With these words, all the ten directions of the six world systems were burned, further burned and absolutely burned. They blazed, further blazed, and absolutely blazed. Throughout they were filled, further filled, and absolutely filled by the host of the blazing maṇḍala. [10]

[Tibetan]

—ces brjod-pas 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad tshig / rab-tu tshig / kun-tu [rab-tu] tshig-go / 'bar / rab-tu 'bar / kun-tu [rab tu] 'bar-ro / thams-cad-du 'bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs-kyis gang rab-tu gang / kun-tu gang-bar gyur-to / [10]

Commentary:

[The third part (of this chapter) is the synopsis or conclusion concerning the extraordinary signs (associated with these mantras. It comments on Ch. 16.10):]

With these words (-ces-brjod-pas), the impure objects forming the container, i.e. all the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad), along with the host of obscurations which are their contents, (were transformed as follows): Among them, the non-virtuous acts of body were burned (tshig), those of speech were further burned (rab-tu tshig), and those of mind were absolutely burned (kun-tu tshig-go). Then, once these ordinary objects along with their obscurations had been burned, the apparitional containing worlds blazed as appearances of pristine cognition—the three media of those to be trained respectively blazed ('bar) as the pristine cognition of Buddha-body, further blazed (rab-tu 'bar) as (the pristine cognition) of Buddha-speech, and absolutely blazed (kun-tu 'bar) as (the pristine cognition) of Buddha-mind. At this time throughout (thams-cad-du) apparitional existence which comprises the containing-worlds and their contents, confined by the limits of space, all the reaches of space were filled (gang) with the maṇḍala of Buddha-body by (-kyis) the host of blazing maṇḍalas ('bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor-gyi tshogs) who are natural expressions of the five enlightened families.

Then, derived from these Buddha-bodies, they were pervasively or further filled (rab-tu gang) with the natural sounds of secret mantras, equal in extent to a thousand claps of thunder. And finally, everything was absolutely filled (kun-tu gang-bar gyur-to) with the non-dual nature of Buddha-mind, and pervaded by the Buddha-body of reality, with its emanations of great spirituality, light and brilliance.

Moreover, these three maṇḍalas (of Buddha-body, speech and mind) filled, further filled and absolutely filled (gang rab-tu gang kun-tu gang) space, earth, and the firmament between them. The self-manifesting spontaneous Bounteous Array itself was filled, further filled, and absolutely filled with an array of light, charisma, and pristine cognition.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 16.11):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 16.11]

This completes the sixteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive With Respect to the Real entitled the Emanation of the Maṇḍala of Buddha-Speech of the Great Assembly of Wrathful Deities. [11]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las khro-bo'i tshogs chen-po'i gsung-gi dkyil-khor spros-pa'i le'u-ste bcu-drug-pa'o / [11]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 16.11):]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the sixteenth chapter (le'u ste bco-drug-ba) from the (las) supremely Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of Buddha-speech Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) natural sound of pristine cognition. It is entitled the Emanation of the (spros-pa'i) inconceivably secret Mandala of (-gi dkyil-khor) Buddha-Speech of the Great Assembly of Wrathful Deities (khro-bo'i tshogs chen-po'i gsung) of pristine cognition.

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Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this following meaningful expression in order to reveal the maṇḍala of these (wrathful deities). [1]

The blazing maṇḍala with its four spokes
Is adorned with four corners,
Endowed with quadrangular shape and four embrasured gates.
It is beautified by two blazing courtyards, [2]
Resplendent with skulls, snakes,
Diverse things, and sunlight,
And shimmering with many flaming bursts. [3]

(Supported) by the talons of bull,
Buffalo, leopard, tiger, and fierce bear,
The mighty lords beginning with Mahādeva are in union. [4]

The terrifying Buddha-bodies are dark-brown.
Dark-blue, dark-yellow, dark-red, and dark-green,
With three heads, six arms, and four legs wide apart. [5]

They wear various raw hides—
Snakes, skull-garlands, and garb of sun and moon.
They roar in a great voice, awesome and terrifying. [6]

To represent the chillocosm and its horizon
They wield diverse hand-implements,
Including vajra, human skull-cup filled (with blood),
Sword, axe, and ploughshare.
And they are embraced by the terrifying host of their queens. [7]

These (deities) are well beautified
By the mudrās of the sensory locations,
By the mudrās of the sense-objects
And by the mudrās of the four (sensory) gates. [8]

They are beautified by their retainers,
And a host of concubines and maid-servants,
Twenty-eight in number.
These maintain their own seats,
Hand-implements, and servile guises. [9]

With these words, throughout the ten directions of the six world-systems the entire blazing maṇḍala became radiant. [10]

This completes the seventeenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Revelation of the Maṇḍala of Wrathful Deities. [11]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.1]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this following meaningful expression in order to reveal the maṇḍala of these (wrathful deities). [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos / de-dag-gi dkyil-'khor bstan-pa'i phyir ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (543.2-550.6):]

The second section (of the extensive exegesis on the branches of means for attainment of the wrathful deities in accordance with the path—see p. 1147) is the maṇḍala of reflected images which are supports for visualisation.

There are three subdivisions, namely, a general teaching on the causal basis for the emergence of the maṇḍala, a detailed explanation of the nature of that maṇḍala, and the appearance of its wondrous signs.

[The first (comments on Ch. 17.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of Buddha-speech or secret mantras had been revealed, then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos) uttered this following meaningful expression in order to reveal the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor bstan-pa'i phyir ched-du-brjod-na 'di brjod-do) of reflected Images for the sake of those to be trained in posterity. This is because it is required as a visualisation support to clarify the form of these (de-dag-gi) cloud-masses of wrathful deities and their secret mantras.

The second subdivision comprises both the supporting celestial palace and the supported maṇḍala of deities. The former has three aspects:

[i. As for the actual celestial palace (which comments on Ch. 17.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.2]

The blazing maṇḍala with its four spokes
Is adorned with four corners,
Endowed with quadrangular shape and four embrasured gates.
It is beautified by two blazing courtyards, [2]

[Tibetan]

'bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor rtsibs bzhi-pa /
gru-chad bzhi-yis rnam-par brgyan /
gru-bzhi sgo-khyud bzhi-dang ldan /
'bar-ba'i bar-'khyams gnyis-kyis mdzes / [2]

Commentary:

[The second subdivision comprises both the supporting celestial palace and the supported maṇḍala of deities.]

[The former has three aspects:]

[i. As for the actual celestial palace (which comments on Ch. 17.2):]

As a symbol of the nature of the five enlightened families, the ground below the palace comprises a circular maṇḍala with its four spokes (dkyil-'khor rtsibs-bzhi-pa) in the form of a central axis and perimeter. The palace itself is an expanse of blazing ('bar-ba'i) fire, (confined) neither inside nor outside, which is indicative of the five pristine cognitions. It is adorned with four corners (gru-chad bzhi-yis rnam-par brgyan) to symbolise the four immeasurables and the four truths. In addition, the celestial palace of pristine cognition is endowed with (dang-ldan) quadrangular shape (gru-bzhi) to indicate that it is extensive in enlightened attributes, and four embrasured gates (sgo-khyud bzhi) to symbolise the four approaches to liberation. In its centre, to indicate the five Buddha-bodies, it is beautified by a four-spoked circle and four rightangles. As such, it is beautified (mdzes) by tiered pediments representing the eight approaches to liberation, and by two (gnyis-kyis) courtyards (bar-'khyams) of blazing ('bar-ba'i) pristine cognition, outer and inner, to symbolise the meaning of the two truths; and it is raised high

upon great walls of skulls.

[ii. As for the ornaments with which it is adorned (commenting on Ch. 17.3):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.3]

Resplendent with skulls, snakes,
Diverse things, and sunlight,
And shimmering with many flaming bursts. [3]

[Tibetan]

thod-sbrul sna-tshogs nyi-mas brjid /
'bar-ba'i 'phro-ba mang-po 'khrug / [3]

Commentary:

[ii. As for the ornaments with which it is adorned (commenting on Ch. 17.3):]

For the most part this description resembles that of the aforementioned (palace of the peaceful deities).[1] in particular however, it has walls of dry and moist skulls (thod), girded by wreaths of black snakes (sbrul); it is adorned with diverse things (sna-tshogs) including tassles of skulls and snakes, window appertures of sun and moon, beams of Brahmā gods, pillars of supreme human corpses (mchog-chen), pillar-bases of tortoise, laths of human corpses, planks of supreme animal corpses (mchog-phran), roof slates of human skins, necklaces of intestine, halfnecklaces of hearts, and the four gates have thresholds of tortoise, lintels of crocodile, steps (skyes-bu) of black snakes, and door-panels of charnel ground cadavers. It is resplendent with (brjid) roof-parapets and ornaments of sunlight (nyi-mas), moonlight, and planets and stars, and it is beautified by shimmering ('khrug) light-rays and with many (mang-po) rings of fiery sparks which burst ('phro-ba) forth into the ten directions from the tips of their flaming ('bar-ba'i) blaze.

[The third concerns the distinctive features of their seats (It comments on Ch. 17.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above. Ch. 6, sections 2-5.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.4]

(Supported) by the talons of bull,
Buffalo, leopard, tiger, and fierce bear,
The mighty lords beginning with Mahādeva are in union. [4]

[Tibetan]

khyu-mchog ma-he gzig-dang stag /
gtum-pa dom-gyi sbar-bas-ni /
dbang-phyug lha-chen la-sogs zung / [4]

Commentary:

[The third concerns the distinctive features of their seats (It comments on Ch. 17.4):]

The wrathful deities are supported by (-bas-ni) the talons (spar) of (-gyi) the bull (khyu-mchog) who overpowers living beings, the buffalo (ma-he) who has great brilliance, the leopard (gzig-dang) who is most malicious, the tiger (stag) who is most courageous, and the bear (dom) who is naturally fierce (gtum-pa).[1]

The explanation that these (talons) are claws with which Mahādeva "grasps" the ignorant is invalid. The male and female proud spirits are in fact spread out upon seats formed of those (animals). Upon those seats, the mighty lords (dbang-phyug) among proud spirits, beginning with Mahādeva (lha-chen la-sogs), are in union (zung) as husband and wife, and they are spread out. The term bzung, "to grasp", is a corruption in the text. These creatures (forming the seats) in fact manifest in and of themselves in order to symbolise the five pristine cognitions associated with Buddha-body, speech and mind.[2]

The latter, the maṇḍala of the supported deities comprises both the presence of the central deities and the array of their retinue.

[i. The central deities have three aspects, of which the first concerns the colours of their bodies and the forms assumed by their faces and arms. (It comments on Ch. 17.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. H.V. Guenther, *Matrix of Mystery*, p. 163. where khyu-mchog is rendered as Eagle (Garuḍa?) and dom as boar. Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 401, holds the central throne to be that of the bear. while the eastern throne in his view is that of the bull.

[2]:

Lo-chen, op. cit.. p. 401, reads gzung. In addition, he explains that Mahādeva and consort are prostrate on the central throne, Gandharvas are prostrate on the eastern throne, Yama spirits on the southern one, Rākṣasas on the western one, and Yakṣas on the northern one.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.5]

The terrifying Buddha-bodies are dark-brown.
Dark-blue, dark-yellow, dark-red, and dark-green,
With three heads, six arms, and four legs wide apart. [5]

[Tibetan]

smug-nag sngo-nag ser-nag-dang /
dmar-nag ljang-nag 'jigs-pa'i sku /
dbu-gsum phyag-drug zhabs-bzhir bgrad / [5]

Commentary:

[i. The central deities have three aspects, of which the first concerns the colours of their bodies and the forms assumed by their faces and arms. (It comments on Ch. 17.5):]

As to their body-colours, the central deity (Buddha Heruka) is dark-brown (smug-nag) because delusion is inherently pure. Vajra Heruka is dark-blue (sngo-nag) because hatred is pure. Ratna Heruka is dark-yellow (gser-nag-dang) because pride is pure. Padma Heruka is dark-red (dmar-nag) because desire is pure; and Karma Heruka is dark-green (ljang-nag) because jealousy is pure. The basic face (of each of these Herukas) is coloured in that manner.

The right faces of the four Herukas of the centre, east, west and north are white, while the right face of (the Heruka) to the south is blue. The left faces of (the Herukas) to the centre, south and north are red, while the left faces of those to the east and west are yellow. All of them are said to be "dark" (nag) because they indicate that the enlightened activity of wrath is perfected. Such utterly terrifying Buddha-bodies ('jigs-pa'i sku) are visible in the perception of the venomous beings to be trained.

As for the positions of their faces and arms, all of these deities are

endowed with three heads (dbu-gsum) because they have purified the three poisons and possess the three Buddha-bodies. They have six arms (phyag-drug) because they have mastered the six pristine cognitions,[1] and they liberate the six classes of living beings through the six transcendental perfections; and they have four legs (zhabs-bzhir) which are wide apart (bgrad), either stretched out or bent inwards, in order to symbolise that they possess the four miraculous abilities and Instruct the four kinds of demons.[2]

[The second aspect concerns their ornamental garb and the display of their Buddha-speech. (It comments on Ch. 17.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the six Jñāna, see above Ch. 1, p. 413.

[2]:

The rdzu-'phrul bzhi are identical to the rdzu-'phrul rkang-bzhi enumerated above, Ch. 1, p. 385. On the "four demons" see also above, foreward and title, note 12.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.6]

They wear various raw hides—

Snakes, skull-garlands, and garb of sun and moon.

They roar in a great voice, awesome and terrifying. [6]

[Tibetan]

ko-rlon gos-ni sna-tshogs gyon /
rngam-pa'i sgra-chen 'jigs-par sgrogs /
sbrul-dang thod-'phreng nyi-zla'i chas / [6]

Commentary:

[The second aspect concerns their ornamental garb and the display of their Buddha-speech. (It comments on Ch. 17.6):]

In the former case, they have eight kinds of glorious garb. They wear (gyon) various (sna-tshogs) raw hides (ko-rlon gos-ni)—upper garments of elephant hide to illustrate that they possess the meaning of the greater vehicle, upper garments of human hide from the charnel ground which overwhelms the host of proud spirits, and skirts of tiger hide which

liberate (beings) from extremes of the subject-object dichotomy. They have crown ornaments of white snakes (sbrul) representing the ruling class (kṣatriya), ear and throat ornaments of yellow snakes representing the artisan class (vaiśya), necklaces and shoulderbands of red snakes representing the priestly class (brahman), girdles of green snakes representing the unskilled class (śūdra), and bracelets and anklets of black snakes representing the outcastes (caṇḍāla).[1]

They have skull-garlands (thod-phreng) which include crown ornaments made of dry human cranium, shoulder-ornaments of old decayed skulls, and necklaces formed of fifty-one fresh skulls. They have the garb of sun and moon (nyi-zla'i chas) disks which diffuse light from their right and left shoulders, symbolising that they are illuminated by skillful means and discriminative awareness.

Illustrated by these ornaments, the eight (kinds of garb) are completed by spots of dry blood, marks of grease, and mounds of human ashes. Thus the eight kinds of garb associated with the charnel ground are raw hides, snakes, skull-garlands, sunlight and moonlight, dry blood, grease, and ashes.[2]

As for the display or roar of their Buddha-speech, they roar in a great voice, awesome and terrifying (rngam-pa'i sgra-chen 'jigs-par sgrogs), which is equal in extent to a thousand claps of thunder.

[The third aspect concerns their symbolic hand-implements, and the conduct of their queens. (It comments on Ch. 17.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. H.V. Guenther, *Matrix of Mystery*. pp. 165-166, who explains how the position of these bodily ornaments corresponds to the status of the four classes of human beings recognised by traditional Indian society.

[2]:

dur-khrod chas-brgyad: raw hides (ko-rlon), snakes (sbrul), skull-garlands (thod-phreng), disks of sunlight (nyi) and of moonlight (zla), dry blood (rakta), grease (zhag) and ashes (thal-ba). As stated in Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 403, the spots of dry blood are between the eyebrows, the grease marks are on the throat, and the mounds of human ashes are on the forehead. Cf. H.V. Guenther, op. cit., p. 166.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.7]

To represent the chillocosm and its horizon
They wield diverse hand-implements,
Including vajra, human skull-cup filled (with blood),
Sword, axe, and ploughshare.
And they are embraced by the terrifying host of their queens. [7]

[Tibetan]

stong-gi 'jig-rten 'khor-yug bcas /
rdo-rje dung-chen gang-ba-dang /
ral-gri dgra-sta gshol la-sogs /
rang-gi lag-cha sna-tshogs-bsnams /
btsun-mo 'jigs-pa'i tshogs-dang 'khril / [7]

Commentary:

[The third aspect concerns their symbolic hand-implements, and the conduct of their queens. (It comments on Ch. 17.7):]

As to the former, Buddhaguhya interprets this passage to mean that they have hand-implements including (la-sogs) a vajra (rdo-rje) and wheel in their first pair of right and left hands, a sword (ral-gri) and human skull-cup (dung-chen) in their second pair of hands, and an axe (dgra-sta) and ploughshare (gshol) in their final pair of hands. He then says that the words "including" indicate the trident and the club. Rong-zom-pa claims, however, that their first right hands respectively hold these respective hand-implements, while their first left hands hold a skull full of bleed; end the other hands hold those other Implements in sequence.[1]

The present explanation corresponds to that of the Indestructible Reality of the Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15), in which the first right hands (of the Herukas) respectively hold these (identifying) hand-implements, i.e. the first right hand of Vajra Heruka holds a nine-pronged vajra. The second right hand of (all Herukas) of the five enlightened families holds a five-pronged vajra, while the second left hand holds a human skull-cup, i.e. a hairless cranium filled with blood. The first right hand of Karma Heruka holds a sword. The first left hand of the Tathāgata (Buddha) Heruka and the last left hand of the Ratna Heruka both hold an axe. The first left hand of Karma Heruka holds a ploughshare. The last left hand of Vajra Heruka and the last left hand of Karma Heruka both hold a small drum to represent the chiliocosm and its horizon (stons-gi 'jig-rten 'khor-bcas).[2]

The word "Including" (la-sogs-pa) also Infers that the first right hand of Buddha Heruka holds a wheel, that of Ratna Heruka holds a gemstone, that of Padma Heruka holds a lotus; the last left hand of Buddha Heruka holds a khaṭvāṅga, the first left hand of Ratna Heruka holds a noose of intestines, the first left hands of Vajra Heruka and Padma Heruka hold bells, the last left hand of Padma Heruka holds a small drum, and the last right hands of all (the Herukas) brandish a club of human corpses (ti-ra), in this way, they respectively wield their diverse hand-implements (rang-gi lag-cha sna-tshogs bsnams).

The Indestructible Reality Of the Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15) also says:

Vajra Heruka holds aloft the vajra and bell
Along with (drum symbolising) the world and its horizon.
Buddha Heruka plays with the wheel and the axe,
And the khaṭvāṅga club.
Ratna Heruka firmly grasps the gemstone.
The noose of intestines and the vajra-axe.
The one of supreme desire holds the great lotus.
And plays the bell and drum.
Karma Heruka has the sword and human ploughshare.
And (the drum) which rejects the world afar.
Their second (pair of hands) hold a vajra and cranium.
Stirring the red (blood).
And (with their last right hands)
They firmly strike a human club (ti-ra chen-po).

As for the embrace of their queens: they are embraced by the (dang-khril) the terrifying host ('jigs-pa'i tshogs) of the five queens (btsun-mo) belonging to their respective enlightened families. These have one face and two arms, the right one entwining around the male consort, and the left one holding a blood-filled skull to the mouth of her lord.

The latter part concerning the array of their retinue has two aspects.

[i. First, there is the array of the twenty female wrathful deities (which comments on Ch. 17.8):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

All commentators state that in their first right hand the Herukas hold the symbol which designates their particular enlightened family, usually vajra, wheel, gemstone, lotus and sword.

[2]:

Lo-chen, op. cit.. p. 404, generally agrees with kLong-chen-pa, with the following exceptions: he allocates the ploughshare to Karma Heruka's last left hand, points out that all the exegetical tantras allocate the crossed-vajra instead of the sword to Karma Heruka's first right hand, and he allocates the bell to all their first left hands. He asserts that this description is consistent with their means for attainment which derive from the eight exegetical tantras (NGB. Vol. 15). kLong-chen-pa, also on the basis of the exegetical Tantras (sgyu-phrul rdo-rje), gives the following sequence: Vajra Heruka (nine-pronged vajra & bell, five-pronged vajra and skull-cup, human club and drum); Buddha Heruka (wheel and axe, five-pronged vajra and skull-cup, human club and khaṭvāṅga); Ratna Heruka (gemstone and noose of intestines, five-pronged vajra and skull-cup, human club & axe); Padma Heruka (lotus and bell, five-pronged vajra & skull-cup, human club

and drum); Karma Heruka (sword & ploughshare, five-pronged vajra and skull-cup, human club & drum). See the foliowins quotation, p. 1169.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.8]

These (deities) are well beautified
By the mudrās of the sensory locations,
By the mudrās of the sense-objects
And by the mudrās of the four (sensory) gates. [8]

[Tibetan]

gnas-dang yul-gyi phyag-rgya-dang /
sgo-bzhi-'i phyag-rgyas rab-mdzes-shing / [8]

Commentary:

[i. First, there is the array of the twenty female wrathful deities (which comments on Ch. 17.8):]

The eight Mātariś of sensory location are the eight aggregates of consciousness, i.e., the locations which generate saṃsāra. They are called the mudrās of the sensory locations (gnas-kyi phyag-rgya) because these (aggregates) are inherently pure.[1] Among them, Gaurī is white, holding a corpse as a club and a blood-filled skull. Caurī is yellow, shooting an arrow from a bow. Pramohā is red, raising in her two hands a crocodile banner. Vetālī is black, raising a vajra and holding a blood-filled skull to her heart. Pukkāsī is reddish-yellow, eating the entrails of a child. Ghasmarī is dark-green, stirring and drinking the blood which fills her cranium-bowl. Śmaśānī is dark-blue, eating the heart of a child. Caṇḍālī is pale-yellow, tearing apart the head and body of a bloated corpse (bam).

The eight Piśācīs are the mudrās of the sense-objects (yul-gyi phyag-rgya-dang). They are called the mudrās of the sense-objects because the objects of the consciousnesses of the five senses—form, sound, smell, taste, and contact, as well as the phenomena which are the object of the intellect, the ground-of-all which is the object of the conflicted mind, and all things which are the outer and inner objects of the ground-of-all are inherently pure.[2] Now, Siṃhamukhī is yellow, seizing a corpse in her hands and pressing it towards her mouth. Vyāghramukhī is red, staring menacingly at a corpse. Śṛgālamukhī is black, licking a human corpse. Svānamukhī is blue, tearing assunder the belly of a corpse. Gṛdhramukhī is red, eating the intestines of a corpse. Kaṅkamukhī is yellow, carrying a large human corpse over her shoulders. Kākamukhī is black, raising a skull-cup and a knife. Ulūkamukhī is blue, casting an iron hook.

These deities are also well beautified by the mudrās of the four (bzhi'i

phyag-rgyas rab-mdzes-shing) female keepers of the (sensory) gates (sgo), who subdue the four erroneous demons and seal them with the four pristine cognitions:[3] The horse-faced one (Vajratejasī) is white, holding an iron hook. The sow-faced one (Vajrāmoghā) is black, holding a lasso. The bear-faced one (Vajralokā) is red, holding an iron chain. The wolf-faced one (Vajravetāli) is green, holding a large bell.

[ii. Secondly, the array of the twenty-eight Īsvarīs or mighty queens (comments on Ch. 17.9):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On this Inherent purity of the rnam-shes tshogs-brgyad, see also above, pp. 394-395. Cf. H.V. Guenther, Matrix of Mystery, p. 167.

[2]:

On this inherent purity of rnam-shes yul-brgyad, see also above note.

[3]:

The gatekeepers represent the sensory gates through which the activities of pure sensory location and object emerge. Cf. H.V. Guenther, op. cit., pp. 170-171. On the "four demons", see above, foreword and title, note 12. The ye-shes bzhi are the four peripheral pristine cognitions.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.9]

They are beautified by their retainers,
And a host of concubines and maid-servants,
Twenty-eight in number.
These maintain their own seats,
Hand-implements, and servile guises. [9]

[Tibetan]

slas-dang byi-mo bran-mo'i tshogs /
bcu-gnyis-dang-ni brgyad-kyis mdzes /
rang-gi stan-dang lag-cha-dang /
ci-bgyi zhes-ni chas-te gnas / [9]

Commentary:

[ii. Secondly, the array of the twenty-eight Īsvarīs or mighty queens

(comments on Ch. 17.9):]

These are beautified (mdzes) and surrounded by (-kyis) their retainers (slas) or wives, and (dang) a host of (-'i tshogs) intimate concubines (byi-mo) and maid-servants (bran-mo), who are named according to the particular rites which they serve, twenty-eight in number (bcu-gnyis dang-ni brgyad). They maintain (gnas), as a retinue, their own (rang-gi) respective seats (stan-dang) of corpses, hand-implements (lag-cha-dang) including fresh skulls and servile guises (ci-bgyi zhes-ni chas-te) which request ritual activities.

They are present as follows: Manurākṣasī is dark-brown, holding a fresh skull. Brahmāṇī is reddish-yellow, holding a lotus. Raudrī is pale-green, holding a trident. Vaiṣṇavī (here = rtogs-'dod) is blue, bearing a wheel. Kaumārī is red, holding a short spear. Indrāṇī is white, holding a vajra. Piṅgalā (here = 'dod-pa) is red, holding sandalwood. Amṛtā is red, holding a lotus. Saumī (or Śāntī, here = zla-ba) is white, holding a white lotus. Daṇḍī is green, holding a club. Rākṣasī is dark-red, drinking a skull full of blood. Bhakṣasī is dark-green, eating entrails. Ratī is red, holding a curved knife. Rudhiramadī is red, holding a ploughshare. Ekacārīṇī is yellow, holding a razor. Manohārikā is red, shooting a bow and arrow. Siddhikarī is white, holding a vase. Vāyudevī is blue, waving a flag. Mahāmāraṇā is white, holding a sword. Agnāyī is red, holding a bright firebrand. Vārāhī is black, holding a noose of canine teeth. Cāmuṇḍī is black, eating a human corpse. Bhujaṇā is white, drinking blood from a skull. Varuṇāṇī is red, holding a lasso of snakes. Mahākālī (is black), holding an iron hook. The Yellow Rākṣasī (Lambodarā) holds a lasso. The Red Rākṣasī (Mahāchāgalā) holds an iron chain; and the Dark Rākṣasī (Mahākumbhakarṇī) rings a bell.

This chapter does not entirely coincide in its description (of the deities) with that which is generally given in the drawing (of the maṇḍala), its meditation, and so forth.[1]

[iii. Thirdly (see p. 1162), the appearance of their wondrous signs (comments on Ch. 17.10):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Cf. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, op. cit., p. 404, who presents slightly different account of these hand-implements from the standpoint of the "means for attainment" (sgrub-thabs). Also, pp. 406-407, he explains how the number of deities forming the wrathful maṇḍala may be extended in the course of meditation.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.10]

With these words, throughout the ten directions of the six world-systems the entire blazing maṇḍala became radiant. [10]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas/ 'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-du 'bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor kun-tu gsal-bar gyur-to / [10]

Commentary:

[iii. Thirdly (see p. 1162), the appearance of their wondrous signs (comments on Ch. 17.10):]

With these words (-zhes brjod-pas), throughout the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad-du), the blazing maṇḍala ('bar-ba'i dkyil-'khor) or fiery mass of the wrathful deities of pristine cognition, equal in extent to the number of atoms in the world-systems and entirely (kun-tu) pervaded by space and reality's expanse, became radiant (gsal-bar-gyur-to) with the apparitions of Buddha-body, speech and mind.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 17.11):]

[Read next page]

Text 17.11 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 17.11]

This completes the seventeenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Revelation of the Maṇḍala of Wrathful Deities. [11]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor bstan-pa'i le'u-ste bcu-bdun-pa'o / [11]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 17.11):]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the seventeenth chapter (le'u ste bcu-bdun-pa) from the (las) natural Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) nature of the maṇḍala, entitled Revelation (bstan-pa'i) and analysis of the Mandala of

Wrathful Deities (khro-bo'i dkyil-'khor).

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Chapter 18 - A Teaching on Genuine Offering and Liberality

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Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great offerings which are pleasing. [1]

Now, as for genuine offerings and liberality:

At the outset, when liberated from the experiences

Which the self applies through (mis-)conception,

The non-dual intelligence should "liberate"

The pitiable world-systems of negative attitudes without duality. [2]

The supreme offering produced by embrace

And derived from sexual union,

Is pleasing to oneself.

And thereby should confer pleasure. [3]

The supreme sacraments for attaining sameness

Are offered to the assembly

Which is the same as oneself. [4]

As for food, chewables, drink, clothing

And all things that possess the five raptures, [5]

They form a maṇḍala which dissolves in the maṇḍala. [6]

If the most amazing enlightened attributes

Of the sugatas who emerge

In the ten directions and four times

Do not become extraneously present.

It goes without saying that nor do those

Of the gods, ogres and so forth. [7]

Worthy Yogins have perfected the great seal.
And being without the dualistic mind which visualises.
They blaze forth as the great maṇḍala. [8]

At these words, all the ten directions of the six world-systems were filled with great offerings which are pleasing. [9]

This completes the eighteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled A Teaching on Genuine Offering and Liberality. [10]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.1]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great offerings which are pleasing. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos mnyes-pa'i mchod-pa chen-po
'di ched-du brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (550.6-556.1):]

The third section (of the extensive exegesis of the branches of the means for attaining the maṇḍala of wrathful deities in accordance with the path—see p. 1147) concerns the offerings which should be made (to the wrathful deities). It has three subdivisions, namely, the background motivation, an explanation of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 18.1):]

Once the maṇḍala had been revealed, then the Transcendent Lord (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das), who is the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) with respect to the display of offering-clouds, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great offerings which are pleasing (mnyes-pa'i mchod-pa chen-po 'di ched-du brjod-do) on account of their outer, inner and secret natures.[1]

The second subdivision has three parts, namely, a general teaching on the offerings connected with rites of sexual union and "liberation", a particular exegesis of the offerings of the desired attributes which are

sacramental substances, and a description of their beneficial attributes or accomplishments which are attained.

[i. The first of these has two aspects, among which the former concerns the offerings associated with rites of "liberation" (It comments on Ch. 18.2):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the distinctions between outer, inner and secret offerings, see also above. Introduction, p. 121, note 219.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.2]

Now, as for genuine offerings and liberality:

At the outset, when liberated from the experiences

Which the self applies through (mis-)conception,

The non-dual intelligence should "liberate"

The pitiable world-systems of negative attitudes without duality. [2]

[Tibetan]

de-la mchod-sbyin dam-pa-ni /

thog-mar bdag-nyid rtogs-goms bsgral /

de-nas gnyis-med blo-yis-ni /

blo-ngan 'jig-rten snying-re-rje /

gnyis-su med-par bsgral-bar bya'o / [2]

Commentary:

The second subdivision has three parts, namely, a general teaching on the offerings connected with rites of sexual union and "liberation", a particular exegesis of the offerings of the desired attributes which are sacramental substances, and a description of their beneficial attributes or accomplishments which are attained.

[i. The first of these has two aspects, among which the former concerns the offerings associated with rites of "liberation" (It comments on Ch. 18.2):]

Now (de-la), the provision of merit includes the offerings (mchod) which are to be made on behalf of the conquerors, and the liberality (sbyin) which is to be exercised for the sake of sentient beings. As for (-ni) these, the most genuine (dam-pa) and supreme among them is the

authentic offering of primordially pure mind-as-such, in which there is no dichotomy between the object of offering and the act of offering. This is the great seal among offerings. Therefore, at the outset (thog-mar), when one has been liberated (bsgral) in the originally uncreated disposition from all negative attitudes which grasp the experiences (goms) of substance and signs in terms of the eight extremes of erroneous conception[1] and the subject-object dichotomy, i.e. from those attitudes which the self (bdag-nyid) applies to this saṃsāra through the mis-conception (rtog) of ignorance, one should meditate that all outer and inner phenomena have the nature of space.

Accordingly the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol 15) says:

The supreme great seal of offering
Liberates all the mind's accumulated ideas.
One meditates in the natural disposition of space.
Referring neither to the act of offering,
Nor to the subject of offering.

There are some who add (by way of comment on this verse) that one should "unite" (sbyor-ba) in experiential meditation (goms) through which the view is "understood" (rtogs), but that seems to be a form of misunderstanding.[2]

There is indeed no contradiction whether (this passage) is applied to the preliminary stage or to the perfection stage of offerings in general. Yet, because it refers more literally to the offering of "liberation" it should be interpreted as follows:GL_NOTE:222487:} From beginningless time hatred freely emerges because there are experiences (goms) which misconceive (rtog) in terms of the dichotomy of self and others. Therefore, at the time of liberation, one is said to be liberated (bsgral), by means of the non-dual truth and the disposition of non-referential compassion, from one's own apprehension of the subject-object dichotomy and from the attitude that skillful means and discriminative awareness are objects to be attained.

As for the actual way in which "liberation" occurs: Once one's own dualistic ideas have been liberated in the expanse of reality, then (de-nas) the non-dual intelligence (gnyis-med blo-yis-ni) of the object to be liberated and the self or subject of liberation, should practise rites of "liberation" through great skillful means and compassion from a disposition in which discriminative awareness does not abide in the two extremes. One should meditate with immeasurable loving kindness and compassion thinking of the pitiable (snying-re-rje) minds in the lower world-systems ('jig-rten) where sentient beings of the ten fields and so forth exist with negative attitudes (blo-ngan).[4] Knowing the self to be merely like an apparition or an optical illusion, one should "liberate" (bsgral-bar-bya) them through the realisation that although they do relatively appear, ultimately beings are without duality (gnyis-su med-par).

This (explanation) is suitable in the present context, but one should also examine in detail the sections on the enlightened activity of wrath in Chapter Eleven and in Chapter Twenty.[5]

[The latter concerns the offering associated with the rites of sexual union. (It comments on Ch. 18.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The "eight extremes of erroneous conception" (phyin ci-log spros-pa'i mtha' brgyad); the extremes of creation (skye), cessation ('gag), permanence (rtag), impermanence (chad), going ('gro), comings ('ong), singularity (gcig) and difference (tha-dad).

[2]:

Lo-chen. op. cit., p. 408, includes both rtog and rtogs in his explanation of this verse.

[3]:

Lo-chen clearly comments on this section only in terms of the liberation of oneself and not from the standpoint of the compassionate "liberation" of others. kLong-chen-pa includes both interpretations.

[4]:

The "sentient beings of the ten fields" (zhing-bcu Ita-bu'i sems-can) are those of the kamadhātu, i.e., the Kāmadevaṣaṭkula (Mahāvīyutpatti 3078-3083) along with the humans, animals, pretas, and denizens of the hells. See the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction.

[5]:

I.e, Ch. 11, pp. 914-922; Ch. 20, 1258-1261.

Text 18.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.3]

The supreme offering produced by embrace
And derived from sexual union,
Is pleasing to oneself.
And thereby should confer pleasure. [3]

[Tibetan]

'khril-ba'i mchod-chen mnyam-sbyor-bas /
bdag-nyid mnyes-pas mnyes-par bya / [3]

Commentary:

[The latter concerns the offering associated with the rites of sexual union. (It comments on Ch. 18.3):]

In accordance with the aforementioned explanation,[1] the maṇḍala is invited into the secret centres of oneself and one's female consort who are visually created as the deities. Then, the supreme (chen) sacrament of offering (mchod) or blissful "enlightened mind" (seminal fluids) produced by the non-dual embrace ('khril-ba'i) of the male and female consorts, which is an essence derived from the sexual union (mnyam-sbyor-bas) of the vajra (penis) and lotus (vagina), is pleasing to oneself (bdag-nyid mnyes), and thereby (-pas), it should confer pleasure (mnyes-par-bya) on all the Tathāgatas.

[ii. Secondly, the particular exegesis of the offerings of the desired attributes which are sacramental substances has two aspects, of which the former concerns the offering of nectar as a sacrament. (It comments on Ch. 18.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See Ch. 11, pp. 900ff., esp. pp. 912-913.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.4]

The supreme sacraments for attaining sameness

Are offered to the assembly

Which is the same as oneself. [4]

[Tibetan]

mnyam-pa'i sgrub-rdzas chen-po-dag /
bdag-dang mnyam-pa'i tshogs-la 'bul / [4]

Commentary:

[ii. Secondly, the particular exegesis of the offerings of the desired attributes which are sacramental substances has two aspects, of which the former concerns the offering of nectar as a sacrament. (It comments on Ch. 18.4):]

The supreme sacraments (rdzas chen-po-dag) including the five nectars for attaining (sgrub) the accomplishment of sameness (mnyam-pa'i) with respect to self and others, or saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are one's own

components, sensory bases and activity fields which abide within the primordial maṇḍala. Visualising them through profound contemplation, they are offered to the assembly (tshogs-la 'bul) of deities of pristine cognition, which is the same as oneself (bdag-dang mnyam-pa'i).

These five nectars, namely excrement, urine, human flesh, blood, and semen, essentially are the primordially pure expanse of reality, and, naturally expressed, they are the five enlightened families beginning with the enlightened family of the Tathāgata. They abide and are consecrated as the essence of the deities of pristine cognition. When utilised, they are a supreme medication because they dispel the five poisons and elemental diseases.

It says in the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The medications compounded from
The eight thousand roots
Which are naturally present and originally pure
In the union of all the Buddhas
Are sacraments for attaining the five perfect pristine cognitions.
They are the supreme nectar which liberates
All sentient beings of the five classes,
And dispels the five poisons.

These medications compounded from eight thousand roots are analysed according to the five pristine cognitions.[1]

[The latter concerns the offering of the desired attributes. It has two sections, of which the first concerns the sacraments which are offered. (It comments on Ch. 18.5):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

According to mKhan-po Thub-bstan of rDzogs-chen, they comprise eight roots, each of which has one thousand branches.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.5]

As for food, chewables, drink, clothing
And all things that possess the five raptures, [5]

[Tibetan]

bza'-dang bca'-dang btung-dang bgo /

Commentary:

[The latter concerns the offering of the desired attributes. It has two sections, of which the first concerns the sacraments which are offered. (It comments on Ch. 18.5):]

There are sacraments of food (bza'-dang) such as meat and butter, chewables (bca'-dang) including the fruit of trees, drink (btung-dang) such as tea and the wine of grapes, clothing (bgo) such as Khotanese brocade (li-chu) and Sahor cloaks (za-ber), and all things (thams-cad) that possess the five raptures (longs-spyod lnga-ldan) or desired attributes of gods and humans. As for (-ni) these sacraments...[1]

[The second section of the offering of desired attributes concerns the making of these offerings. (It comments on Ch. 18.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This rendering of the obscure terms li-chu and za-ber is suggested by mKhan-po Thub-bstan. As an alternative, "silken cloaks" (zab-ber) has also been suggested. According to Lo-chen, p. 409, the clothing offered is said to be "fine and soft" (grab-'jam).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.6]

They form a maṇḍala which dissolves in the maṇḍala. [6]

[Tibetan]

dkyil-'khor-la-ni dkyil-'khor thim / [6]

Commentary:

[The second section of the offering of desired attributes concerns the making of these offerings. (It comments on Ch. 18.6):]

These sacraments of offering form a maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of the deities of desired attributes, which dissolves (thim) in the (la-ni) object of the offering, visualised as a maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor) of the deities of pristine cognition. Thus the offering is made, and it should be enjoyed, knowing that oneself is the male consort, and by displaying the sacraments as the female consort.[1]

The Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-7) also says:

One who has the diverse edibles
Comprised in (the offerings of) meat and ale
Will indeed achieve the true greatness—
The supreme fortune of joyous rapture.

[iii. Thirdly, concerning the beneficial attributes of these (offerings) there are two sections, of which the former depicts the presence of truth even in the common accomplishments. (It comments on Ch. 18.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan bdag yab-tu shes-pa-la rdzas yum-du rol-pa. Cf. the explanation of the sbyor-ba practices in Ch. 11. pp. 900-913

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.7]

If the most amazing enlightened attributes
Of the Sugatas who emerge
In the ten directions and four times
Do not become extraneously present.
It goes without saying that nor do those
Of the gods, ogres and so forth. [7]

[Tibetan]

phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir gshegs-pa-yi /
bde-gshegs yon-tan rmad-po-che /
gzhan-nas yod-pa ma-yin-na /
lha-srin la-sogs smos-ci-dgos / [7]

Commentary:

[iii. Thirdly, concerning the beneficial attributes of these (offerings) there are two sections, of which the former depicts the presence of truth even in the common accomplishments. (It comments on Ch. 18.7):]

If all the most amazing enlightened attributes of the Sugatas who emerge (gshegs-pa-yi bde-gshegs yon-tan rmad-po-che) for the sake of sentient beings in the ten directions and four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhir) do not become extraneously present (gzhan-nas yod-pa ma-yin-na) apart from the experience of the mind, it goes without saying that nor do those

(smos ci-dgos) common accomplishments which are attained. such as (obtaining) the service of the gods and ogres (kha-srin) and the minor rites of pacification. enrichment, subjugation, wrath and so forth (la-sogs). These are bona fide objects of accomplishment.

[The latter concerning the supreme accomplishment (comments on Ch. 18.8):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.8]

Worthy Yogins have perfected the great seal.
And being without the dualistic mind which visualises.
They blaze forth as the great maṇḍala. [8]

[Tibetan]

rnal-'byor las-su rung-rnams-kyis /
phyag-rgya chen-por rdzogs-'gyur-zhing /
gsal-ba'i yid-gnyis med-pa-na /
dkyil-'khor chen-po 'bar-bar 'gyur / [8]

Commentary:

[The latter concerning the supreme accomplishment (comments on Ch. 18.8):]

Yogins (rnal-'byor) who are worthy (las-su rung-rnams-kyis) in realisation and contemplation have perfected (rdzogs-gyur-cing) the symbolic creation stage in which the great seal (phyag-rgya chen-po) of the deity's body resembles the reflection on a mirror. And being (-pa-na) entirely without (med) the dualistic mind which subjectively visualises (gsal-ba'i yid-gnyis) the disposition of effortless non-symbolic Great Perfection as a specific extreme of conceptual elaboration, they arrive at the intention of Samantabhadra, the real nature.[1] They blaze forth as ('bar-bar-'gyur) and obtain the great maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor chen-po) of the three Buddha-bodies, without conjunction or disjunction, along with their enlightened activities.

Now, all things are the miraculous display of mind, and mind too is the nature of the five pristine cognitions. This is symbolised by the sacraments of accomplishment which are made into the path through skillful means, and from which both provisional and conclusive goals are perfected.

It says in the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

Because all substances are mind-as-such
They are the signless expanse of reality.
The five pristine cognitions without independent existence.
And they manifest in and of themselves without fabrication.
Through contemplation of discriminative awareness
And skillful means.
Ability and power do emerge.
One who abides in such a path
Is blessed throughout the ten directions
By all buddhas without exception.
And obtains the blazing maṇḍala.

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 18.9):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. the non-symbolic rdzogs-pa chen-po is directly experienced, without being conceptually elaborated. Note that kLong-chen-pa emphasises the rdzogs-chen interpretation of this verse rather than that of sampannakrama, Cf. Lo-chen, pp. cit., p. 410.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.9]

At these words, all the ten directions of the six world-systems were filled with great offerings which are pleasing. [9]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / mnyes-pa'i mchod-pa chen-pos 'jig-rten drug-gi
phyogs-bcu thams-cad khyab-par gyur-to / [9]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 18.9):]

At these words (-zhes-brjod-pas), all the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu thams-cad), outer and inner, were filled (khyab-par gyur-to) with those great offerings which are pleasing (mnyes-pa'i mchod-pa chen-pos) among the oceanic cloud-mass of outer, inner and secret offerings.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 18.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 18.10]

This completes the eighteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled A Teaching on Genuine Offering and Liberality. [10]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las mchod-sbyin dam-pa bstan-pa'i le'u-ste bco-brgyad pa'o / [10]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 18.10):]

This completes (-o) the exegesis of the eighteenth chapter (le'u-ste bco-brgyad-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of pristine cognition Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) all-pervasive nature, entitled A Teaching on Genuine (dam-pa bstan-pa'i) Offering (mchod) made to the conquerors, And Liberality (sbyin) exercised towards sentient beings by means of unsurpassed sacraments.

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Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great commitments in order that mantra-adepts might succeed. [1]

When the unsurpassed vehicle is well ascertained,
All conflicting emotions and deeds are experienced,
Yet they are engaged, without being accumulated.
And they become the provisions.
This is the excellence of moral discipline and vows. [2]

In the unsurpassed supreme commitments
Moral discipline through training.
And all the unthinkable vows that there are.
Without exception are all gathered and purified. [3]

There is no reference to existence, non-existence, or the middle way.
Life is not existent, in a manner which resembles
An apparition and an optical illusion.
So there is in fact no taking of life.
Life and living creatures are merely misunderstandings, [4]

Because the two truths are indivisible.
There is no difference, as in Nirmāṇarata.
Because there is nothing extraneous that is not given.
There is no taking.

All things are the expanse of the real. [5]
Phenomena are like an apparition.
And they are lies to which names and words are applied.
They are themselves a lie, and when experienced as a lie.
There is nothing to be called a lie,
Even so much as a name. [6]

There is attachment to that which is without attachment.
But in this attachment, there is no attachment.
This is the supreme king of attachment.
It is the supremely great attachment. [7]

One should not abandon the unsurpassed.
One should venerate the Guru.
One should not interrupt the flow of mantras and seals.
One should have loving kindness
For those who enter the genuine path,
And one should not divulge the secret truths outside.
These are the five basic ones—
The supreme commitments to be attained and guarded. [8]

One should not renounce delusion, desire.
Hatred, pride and envy. [9]

One should not dispense with the white seminal fluid.
The red seminal fluid, the excrement, urine and human flesh.
Because they form a pure container.
These ten ancillary commitments
Are experienced by the realisation
Of their primordial purity and sameness. [10]

The five commitments to be attained and guarded
Are the basic ones through (degeneration of) which
One is deprived of the enlightened family. [11]

The two (groups)—the five which are not to be renounced,
And five not to be dispensed with
Are the ancillary commitments, hard to transgress. [12]

If one maintains the commitment of sameness
Which unites in sameness,
One will obtain the Great Perfection of sameness.
But if one transgresses it, one will not obtain Buddha-hood. [13]
Do not speak even for an Instant or a moment
To those apathetic persons
Whose basic commitments have degenerated.
And who do not try to restore them.
The defects of those who have degenerated are indescribable. [14]

If one's basic commitments have degenerated.
All that one would attain is reversed.
And one acquires against one's will
Diversified and unpleasant results. [15]

If one's ancillary commitments have degenerated,
There is no result, and one falls into evil destinies. [16]

Commitments are the supreme indestructible realities.
They are the identity of all the Buddhas. [17]

Among the five basic commitments
Each has two and then thirty subdivisions. [18]

Among the two groups of five ancillary commitments
Each also has twenty subdivisions. [19]

These commitments are most amazing.
In the ten directions of the six world-systems
Commitments are emanated which equal the number
Of the living beings in the three spheres of existence.
In order to train their thoughts. [20]

Moreover the seal of Samantabhadra the supreme conqueror
In which all things are present without exception
Is accomplished in all that is genuine, without attainment.
Such (commitments) are infinitely supreme. [21]

One who holds the supreme awareness of the conquerors
Is venerated by mundane lords and their retinues. [22]

One is intentionally consecrated as a son or brother
By the genuinely supreme ones and the genuine ones. [23]

Those who enter the range of the Sugatas themselves
Unite with fearless Samantabhadra. [24]

The reality Just as it is.
The skillful means which grant instruction.
And all the unthinkable vows that there are
Are without exception pure and spontaneously present. [25]

If there is degeneration,
It is perfected through rites of fulfilment.
Such (benefits) are infinitely supreme. [26]

At these words, the Tathāgatas themselves bowed to the Tathāgata himself. [27]

This completes the nineteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus
Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Commitments. [28]

Commentary 1.1: Verbal definition of Commitments (dam-tshig, samaya)

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[Commentary (556.1-596.4):]

The fourth section (of the extensive exegesis of the means for attaining the maṇḍala of wrathful deities in accordance with the path—see p. 1147) concerns the sequence of commitments maintained by one who is committed. It has three subdivisions, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 19.1):]

[Read next page]

[The second includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.]

[Overview of the Commitments (556.3-578.2)]

This has three parts, namely: the nature of commitments which are to be guarded; the distinctions of commitments and vows; and the gathering of the three trainings without contradiction.

[Commitments which are to be Guarded (556.4-573.3):]

There are five aspects—verbal definition, classification, beneficial attributes, retributions exacted (for their violation), and their means of restoration.

[i. As to the verbal definition:]

The (Tibetan) term dam-tshig or "commitment" is explained to derive from the (Sanskrit) samaya. This definition is in three parts, of which the first is that the "commitments" are laid down because benefits are obtained when they are guarded.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

If one who has obtained empowerment and consecration
In the intention of the genuine (or committed) ones
Acts precisely according to the genuine commitments (dam),
Discrepancies will be burnt away (tshig).

The second definition is that "commitments" are so-called because retribution is exacted when they degenerate.

The same text indeed says:

One who swears to maintain the injunctions
And blessings of the genuine (dam) ones
Naturally becomes accomplished.
One who transgresses these commitments (dam)
Is burnt away (tshig), even when belonging to
(The vehicle of) indestructible reality.

The third definition is that "commitments" are so-called because a conventional oath of allegiance is taken.

It says in the Sūtra Requested by Jñānottara (T. 82):

In order that the most secret amazing
Doctrine of the conquerors
Might be firmly held without degeneration,
Pledges of allegiance are steadfastly upheld
In accordance with the teaching given by the Guru.
This is explained to be "commitment".

In brief, "commitment" is so-called because it refers to the virtuous nature of one who perseveres with body, speech and mind not to break the pledges one has undertaken concerning the renunciation of what should be renounced, and the attainment of what should be attained.

Commentary 1.2: The classification (of commitments)

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parent: Chapter 19 (Text And Commentary)

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[The Nature of Commitments which are to be Guarded (556.4-573.3):]

There are five aspects—verbal definition, classification, beneficial attributes, retributions exacted (for their violation), and their means of restoration.

[ii. The classification (of commitments) has three parts, namely, the essential classification, the ancillary classification, and the inconceivable classification.]

1. The essential classification

The first comprises both the actual essence and its classification. As to the former, there are both basic and ancillary commitments. Basic commitments are said to be those which, in the manner of the roots of a tree, are the source of attributes when they are guarded and cultivated but not when they are unguarded. Ancillary commitments are said to be the skillful means and aids through which those (basic commitments) are guarded.

As to the latter, those (essential commitments) are divided into fifteen—five which are basic and ten which are ancillary. The five basic commitments are not to abandon the unsurpassed (vehicle), to venerate the guru, not to interrupt the mantras and seals, to have loving kindness for those who enter the genuine path, and not to divulge secret truths to others.

Concerning the first basic commitment: One should never abandon the Three Precious Jewels. This means on analysis that, according to the ground, one should not abandon all sentient beings because they abide

primordially as the Three Precious Jewels. According to the path, one should not abandon the twofold enlightened mind, ultimate and relative, the nature in which creation and perfection stages are without duality.[1] According to the result, one should not abandon the three bodies of the unsurpassed Buddhas, their Buddha-speech which comprises the literary transmissions of Sūtra and Tantra along with the doctrines of realisation, and the community which studies these.

[The mind of sentient beings is itself explained to be primordially pure Buddha-hood (Ch. 12.14):]

Mind-as-such is the perfect Buddha.
Do not search elsewhere for the Buddha.

The speech which emerges from the cycle of syllables is also explained to be the doctrine.

The Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15) says:

The languages of living beings
Which emerge from the vowels and consonants
Are the genuine doctrine.

The community is explained to be formed by those who become fields of merit and virtue.

As said in the Tantra of Excellent Attainment (T. 807):

All living beings without exception
Are themselves the virtuous community
Because they accomplish the doctrine in two ways—
They belong to the family which Increases
The aspects of merit including liberality
And to that which also attains virtue.

Furthermore, mind-as-such, the essence which is both relative and ultimate, is the naturally pure Buddha. The two truths and the creation and perfection stages are the doctrine; and those who experientially cultivate them are the virtuous community.

It says in the Magical Net Pristine Cognition (NGB. Vol 15):

The Yogin who retains this nature of unerring truth
Is the embodiment of the Three Precious Jewels.

The three resultant aspects are also described in the following passage from the Supreme Continuum the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

The three refuges are established
By studying the teaching of the Teacher.

According to some expositors, the words "do not abandon the unsurpassed" refer only to a single object (of refuge), but they are

incorrect because they have misunderstood the nature of the Precious Jewels.

The second, the veneration of the guru, comprises both the types of guru and the means of veneration. The former are five in number, among which (the first) is the guru who guides: Such teachers are exemplified by the preceptors of the renunciate vows who guide one to the gates of the doctrine.

It says in the Vinaya:

One should rise from one's seat
Immediately on seeing one's preceptor.

And in the Kārikā (T. 4125):

One should gently knock the door-bolt
Of the Guru's residence.
On entering one should reverently inquire
After the Guru's health and so forth.

(The second) is the guru who liberates the continuum of one's consciousness, exemplified by those masters who explain the doctrine.

The Great Sutra of Final Nirvāṇa (T. 119-121) says:

One should reverently hold as a Guru
The monks who expound the doctrine.

And in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

One who expounds the doctrine
Is the supreme and best among Gurus.
He is venerated as a supreme offering-tree
Among the conquerors.

(The third) is the guru who teaches the esoteric instructions and grants transmission, exemplified by the spiritual benefactors who cultivate the enlightened mind.

It says in the Sutra of the Arrayed Bouquet (T. 44):

He is the spiritual benefactor through whom I beginninglessly cultivated the enlightened mind.

(The fourth) is the master who repairs degeneration and violations (of the commitments), and becomes an object for the confession of sins.

It says in the Tantra of Excellent Attainment (T. 807):

The one to whom confession is made
Is indeed his guru.

(The fifth) is the guru who grants commitments and empowerment.

It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The Guru of indestructible reality
From whom supreme empowerment is obtained
Is the Tathāgata.

In addition to these types there is also explained to be a sixth, namely, the guru whom all venerate as a holy being, and from whom all obtain a little kindness.

It says in the Clarification of Commitments (P. 4744):

There are the masters of all in general.
Those who guide, those who grant commitments.
Those who repair violations (of commitments).
Those who liberate the continuum of consciousness,
And those who reveal esoteric instructions and transmissions.

The latter concerns the means of venerating (the Guru): The Guru is regarded as a genuine object of merit, offering and so forth. Consequently, the self is considered as a disease, the teaching as a medication, its experiential cultivation to be efficacious in the mind, and the spiritual benefactor to resemble a learned physician.

It is said appropriately in the Sūtra of the Arrayed Bouquet (T. 44):

Son of an enlightened family, you should cultivate well the perception of the self as a disease, the doctrine as a medication, its experiential cultivation as the curing of the disease, and the perception of the spiritual benefactor as a skilled physician.

In particular, the master of indestructible reality (vajrācārya) or of secret mantras is venerated in three ways.

(Firstly) he is said to be the fourth precious jewel, as is stated in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

There is the Buddha, the doctrine
The community, and also the master
Who is the fourth (precious jewel).

The equality (of the guru) and the Buddha is also mentioned in the following passage from the Magical Net of Vairocana (T. 466):

The Guru is the same as all the Buddhas.

And (the Guru) is even held to be superior in the Guhyasamāja (T. 442-3), the glorious tantra of Buddha-mind:[2]

A single hair-pore of the Guru is more supreme
Than all Buddhas of the ten directions.

Thus the guru is to be venerated in the ways which please him.

The third basic commitment, that the mantras and seals should not be interrupted, is also twofold. The mantras are a sequence of skillful means for attaining the accomplishments of the different deities, in which recitation is performed in five steps, beginning with the real nature of the deity.[3] The seals are the aspects which facilitate this attaining of accomplishment, namely, the doctrinal seal of thought, the commitment seal of speech, the action seal of transformation, and the great seal of the deity's body.[4]

The best way not to interrupt these (mantras and seals) is when their continuity resembles the flow of a river, the mediocre way is when one abides in sessions (of meditation) by day and night, and the worst is when they are not interrupted for a set period of months or years (in retreat), beginning on the fifteenth or eighth day of the month.[5]

It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

The best perform recitation with a disposition
Which resembles the flow of a river
Or which does not waver day and night
For three days and three nights.
The mediocre do not interrupt (this flow)
For six or four periods during a single month.
In the worst cases, a Yogin with perseverance
Engages in laborious efforts
At set times during each month or each season.
Those who do not do so, abandon the seed of enlightenment,
And similarly the feast- and tormas-offerings.
The worst type does not go beyond years and months.

The fourth basic commitment is loving kindness for those who enter into the genuine path. One should love such persons as a brother. In general there are six types of sibling, brother or sister: Universal siblings include all sentient beings who are primordially one's own brother or sister; siblings of unique teaching include all those who enter into the doctrine of the buddhas; harmonious siblings include those who have the same view and conduct; dear siblings are those who have the same guru; close siblings are those who listen to the doctrine together; and intimate siblings or vajra-brothers are those who receive empowerment together. In this context one should have loving kindness for those who enter into the path of liberation and the greater vehicle in general.

It says in the Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā (T. 92):

Have loving kindness for those who are steadfast in enlightened mind, and who enter into the greater vehicle.

In particular, one should love one's vajra-brothers.

It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

One should always reject attitudes
Which cause distress to vajra-brothers,
And also attitudes which scorn all siblings
Who enter into the genuine path.
Whether intimate or not intimate.
Regard one another with love.
Abandoning the power to inflict (suffering).
In brief, one should fulfil the requirements
Of one's brothers and sisters
Without attachment even to life itself.
Therefore, one's vajra-brothers
From this time until enlightenment
Are supreme friends with whom one inseparably associates.
Similar to the light and the wick of a butter-lamp.

The fifth basic commitment, the one not to divulge secret truths, indicates that the profound view, meditation, conduct and result of the secret mantras are most secret to living beings who are unworthy recipients.

It says in the Propensity for the Commitments (P. 4745):

There are ten categories, namely,
General secrets and interim secrets.
Each of which number four.
Along with worthy secrets.
And entrusted instructions.
The four kinds of general secret
Are explained to be profundity of view and conduct.
Retention of the deity's name
And the signs of accomplishment.
The interim secrets to be acquired
Are the places, times, assistants.
And sacraments associated with attainment.
The commitments which are worthy secrets are:
The first fruits of offering,
Torma-cakes, feast-offerings, skulls,
Kilas, butter-lamps, sacraments.
Hand-implements and maṇḍalas
Which should never be seen by ordinary persons;
The sound of the bell, tinklets and so forth
Which should never ring in the hearing of ordinary persons;
The faults of friends, suppressed irritations
Negative conduct of all sentient beings.
And actions harmful to all.
If kept most secret,
Are the causal basis of enlightenment.
Entrustment refers to the instruction
Previously explained by one's master and siblings.

Thus, profound view, profundity of conduct, retention of the deity's name, and signs of accomplishment are the four general secrets. The

places, times, assistants, and sacraments for attainment are the four interim secrets. The first fruits of offering, tormas-cakes and so forth are the sacraments of commitment which it is improper to see and which are worthy secrets; and entrustment refers to injunctions such as are given by one's 6 master and siblings.

Concerning the ones from whom these ten categories should be kept secret, the same text says:

(They should be kept secret)
From all those whose commitments have been violated.
From those who have erred in their commitments.
And those without commitments
Who have not seen the maṇḍala.
Whether they are intimate or not.

And in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830) it says:

To persons who are unworthy recipients
The times and circumstances (for attainment)
Should be entirely secret.
They should not even be explained
To those who are worthy recipients
Until empowerment has been obtained.

If such secrecy is kept, the same text says:

The mind should not think to teach.
The body performs all its activities covertly.
And speech should not be expressed.
Even though one has the tongue of indestructible reality.

So it is that, among the basic commitments, those not to abandon the deity, to venerate the guru who is the source of accomplishment, and the commitment not to interrupt the mantras and seals are the commitments through which extraordinary enlightened attributes are attained. Their ancillary commitments, which require one to respect those who enter into the genuine path, along with one's brothers and sisters, and not to divulge secret truths to others are the commitments to be guarded because they respectively guard against contradictions of the guru's mind, and guard against contradictions of the reality of deity, mantras and seals.

There are some who say that the commitments to be attained are those concerning the deities along with the mantras and seals, whereas those to respect the guru and siblings, and not to divulge secrets are commitments to be guarded because they guard against contradictions of the Buddha-mind. However that is not the case.

It says in the Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-7):

The great commitments to be attained
Are those not to abandon the deity and Guru.
And not to interrupt the mantras and seals.

Indeed, the Guru is the basis on whom accomplishment is to be attained. Accomplishments emerge when he is pleased.

The same text says:

Completely reject all offerings,
And commence with genuine offerings to the Guru.
Through pleasing him, the supreme attributes
Of omniscience emerge without exception.

And in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The mighty lord of the maṇḍala is the Guru himself.

The guru is thus said to be central in the maṇḍala of deities. Those quotations from the scriptures contradict (the aforementioned wrong opinion) and explain that (devotion to) the guru is exclusively one of the commitments to be attained because it is absolutely necessary to please him.

These five basic commitments are also present in the three commitments of Buddha-body, speech and mind because they do not transgress the three respective natures of Buddha-body, speech and mind. For example, in the commitment not to abandon the unsurpassed, one should practise veneration through body, praise through speech and respect through mind. Similarly one should have respect for the guru, and for one's siblings through body, speech, and mind. Then, the commitment concerning mantras and seals also utilises the body, speech, and mind in their entirety; while the commitment to secrecy is kept secret and concealed by activities of body, speech, and mind.

There are some who say that respect for the Guru and siblings is a commitment of Buddha-body because it basically concerns the activity of the body. that the commitments not to abandon the deity and not to interrupt the mantras and seals are those of Buddha-speech. i.e. the aspects of recitation, and that the one not to divulge secret truths is a commitment of Buddha-mind because it is to be pondered in the mind. This, however, is an incorrect perception because (all the commitments) are similarly endowed (with body, speech and mind) when they are developed.[6]

The latter concerns the ten ancillary commitments, of which there are five not to be abandoned and five to be acquired. The former are the five conflicting emotions, which are not to be abandoned (firstly) because their true nature is known, (secondly) because when retained by skillful means they assist the path, and (thirdly) because they are the Buddha-body and pristine cognition.[7]

The first (of these reasons) is in two parts, among which the conflicting emotions are not to be abandoned (primarily) because they are the enlightened families or seeds of the Buddhas.

There is a Sūtra which says:[8]

The real nature of the deluded mind
Is the real nature of Vajrasattva.
The real nature of Vajrasattva
Is the suchness of reality.

And also in the Sūtra Revealed By Vimalakīrti (T. 176) there is a passage which begins:

Conflicting emotions are the seeds of the Tathāgata.

(Secondly), conflicting emotions are not to be abandoned because they are naturally pure and thus neither to be accepted nor rejected. Even on a relative level conflicting emotions resemble a mirage. They are abandoned of their own accord because they are Instantaneously impermanent, and their appearances do not need to be abandoned because they do not exist as phenomena with true recognisable substance or essence. Therefore they are not to be abandoned.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

Conflicting emotions are apparitional.
Empty of inherent existence.
One who knows their true nature
Of natural impermanence is liberated.

Ultimately, too, conflicting emotions are not abandoned because they do not substantially exist. Though sought everywhere, they are not found as such.

It says in the Sūtra of the Irreversible (T. 240):

Ignorance resembles space.
All things are without characteristics.
There is neither desire nor hatred.
All pride and envy are apparitional.
Without inherent existence.
Unsupported, they are not referred to
As existent or non-existent.

And in the Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva (T. 3871):

Conflicting emotions do not abide in objects.
They do not abide in space.
They are not present in the sense-organs and so forth.
Nor are they in between.

And:

In these things which are primordially empty:
What is gained and what is lost?
What is unpleasant and what is pleasant?
Let phenomenal beings, such as "I",

Accept all things to resemble space.

The second reason why conflicting emotions are not to be abandoned is because they assist the path when retained by skillful means: The five conflicting emotions are the nature of the five pristine cognitions. By experientially cultivating their nature according to the esoteric instructions, one resorts to a shortcut.

It says in the Oceanic Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 15):

The path of conflicting emotions is most pure.

It is the supreme ornament or desired attribute

On the path of skillful means.

Absolutely everything is transformed through that display

Swiftly into the glorious Heruka.

This nature (of conflicting emotions) is also mentioned in the sūtras, as in the following passage from the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

Just as the unclean manure of cities

Benefits fields of sugar-cane,

So the manure which is the conflicting emotion of Bodhisattvas

Benefits the fields of the conquerors' doctrine.

And in the Collection the Greater Vehicle (T. 4048):

For those who possess the great skillful means,

Conflicting emotions are transformed into aspects of enlightenment.

Moreover, if there are no conflicting emotions to be abandoned, it is incorrect to renounce them because even the antidotes which effect renunciation do not emerge. If, however, conflicting emotions do have an apparent reality, it is not to be abandoned because reality itself should be actualised, inasmuch as the reality in which they are empty of inherent existence is also present. In addition, conflicting emotions are not to be abandoned because, dependent on them, one brings about subsidiary benefits for sentient beings.

However, you might ask, if conflicting emotions are not abandoned, surely enlightened attributes are not produced and Buddha-hood is not obtained? The enlightened attributes of the path and the result are obtained exclusively through the seed of conflicting emotions. This is because that seed is pristine cognition and is experienced as such.

Then, one might ask, do they not connect and bind beings within negative existences and so forth? If the true nature of conflicting emotions has been known and then experienced, one is uncovered by flaws, and one acquires exclusively the physical forms and results experienced by happy beings.

There are some who say that if conflicting emotions are made into the path they either must or must not be retained by skillful means. If they must be retained, the skillful means rather than the conflicting emotions would be made into the path. And if they must not be retained, it is implicit that (this path) would not be superior to the ordinary (path).[9]

When this argument is raised, it is explained that barley is held to be made into porridge, but that at the time when (the barley) is roasted and ground it does not become porridge. Instead it becomes flour. If, however, that flour is not actually prepared, there will be no porridge. How would one respond to that? Is it not that the porridge is produced through the causal basis of barley and the conditions of roasting and grinding? In this context too, it is invariably the case that the conflicting emotions of causal

basis are made into the path through skillful means or conditions. The very object that is endowed with conflicting emotions is seen as an object of renunciation by pious attendants and self-centred buddhas. It is seen as an object of conduct by bodhisattvas, it is seen as an object of purity by ordinary adherents of the secret mantras, and it is seen as an object to be acquired by the uncommon (adherents). For example, Just as things fashioned from gold have a single nature but are dirty when made into a wash-basin, clean when

made into a trough, ornamental when made into bracelets, and become receptacles of offering when made into the representative images of deities, although (conflicting emotions) are conditionally perceived in that way by the different vehicles, their essence is primordially pure pristine cognition. This is truly why the nature of conflicting emotions which are transformed into the realities of ground, path and result are not to be renounced.

The third reason is that conflicting emotions are not to be abandoned because they are the Buddha-bodies and pristine cognitions.

It says in the Twenty-Eight Commitments (from the Clarification of the Commitments, p. 4744):

This is because the five conflicting emotions including envy
Are the primordial nature of the five enlightened families.

In this way, delusion is the commitment of Vairocana, who has the pristine cognition of reality's expanse and belongs to the enlightened family of the Tathāgata. Hatred is the commitment of Akṣobhya who has the mirror-like pristine cognition and belongs to the enlightened family of indestructible reality. Pride is the commitment of Ratnasambhava who has the pristine cognition of sameness and belongs to the enlightened family of gemstones. Desire is the commitment of Amitābha who has the pristine cognition of discernment and belongs to the enlightened family of the lotus. And envy is the commitment of Amoghasiddhi who has the pristine cognition of accomplishment and belongs to the enlightened family of activity. Therefore, it is taught that from the moment of the appearance of the five conflicting emotions which arise in all the minds of living beings they are not to be abandoned because they are present as the Buddha-bodies and pristine cognitions.

As for the five commitments to be acquired: these are the five nectars. They are to be acquired because they are in fact the display of primordial reality where there is neither acceptance nor rejection.

It says in the Supplementary Magical Net (NGB. Vol. 14):

The five nectars are primordially pure phenomena.
Transcending all without acceptance or rejection,
They are to be acquired by the learned
As the supreme primordial commitments to be guarded.

These nectars are also to be acquired because they are the nature of the

five enlightened families.

It says in the Penetrating Magical Net (NGB. vol. 15):

The five nectars are the bodies.
Excrement, urine, and seminal fluids
Of the five enlightened families.

These are Indeed to be acquired because they are sacraments for attaining accomplishment.

It says in the Guhyasamāja (T. 442-3):

The supreme commitment of human flesh
Brings the accomplishment of the three supreme
Indestructible realities.[10]

And so forth.

Furthermore, these are to be acquired because, dependent on the five nectars and the five meats, the dākṇīs are gathered and accomplishments are approached.[11]

It says in a Sūtra:[12]

If one eats the flesh of cow, dog and horse.
And the flesh of human and elephant and so forth
All enlightened attributes will be accomplished.
These are our excellent commitments.

And:

When the countless conquerors of the past
Emphatically practised these five ascetic disciplines.
They grasped the supreme commitments.
So these are renowned among the commitments of the past.

So the nectars are also to be acquired because they assist one in the conduct of ascetic discipline.

2. The ancillary classification

The second section (of the classification of commitments to be guarded) concerns the ancillary classification of three hundred and sixty. Now, commitment is the nature of the deity. The basis of all the deities is skillful means and discriminative awareness. Therefore, in any one of the five basic commitments such as not abandoning the unsurpassed, the basis is skillful means and discriminative awareness. These two become six when divided according to Buddha-body, speech, and mind; and these (six) become thirty when each is divided according to Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. With the addition of the basic two (categories) of skillful means and discriminative awareness, they number thirty-two. Then, by dividing all five (basic commitments) in that way, they number one hundred and sixty in all.[13]

As for (the remaining) two hundred ancillary commitments: there are ten ancillary commitments, such as not to abandon desire, each of which comprises both skillful means and discriminative awareness.. Skillful means then has ten aspects, concerning the five pristine cognitions and their five objects, while discriminative awareness also has ten aspects—concerning the five pristine cognitions and their five objects. These two groups of ten make twenty, and all the ten (ancillary commitments) possess these twenty aspects, making two hundred altogether.[14]

Rong-zom-pa claims in his Precious Jewel Commentary (dkon-cog 'grel) that It is from the ancillary commitments that this ancillary classification should be made: Each one of (the ten ancillary commitments) subsumes within it the fivefold Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities, and the three foundations of Buddha-body, speech and mind so that the latter are not themselves the basis for this ancillary classification. As for the two basic categories of skillful means and discriminative awareness, skillful means is endowed with discriminative awareness and discriminative awareness is endowed with skillful means. Both these basic categories are subsumed, making four aspects, and these too are subdivided according to the fivefold Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Therefore, without being grounded in the basic (commitments), this category consists of each ancillary commitment, subdivided into its twenty aspects.[15]

He says:

These commitments are classified as attributes. This enumeration of different characteristics is not explained to refer to distinct (commitments).

3. The inconceivable classification

The third section is the inconceivable classification: As antidotes, the subdivisions of the commitments equal the number of ideas accumulated by sentient beings, so that they are not confined to one specific enumeration.

It says in the Clarification of Commitments (P. 4744):

Concerning the number of commitments:
Beyond description by the conquerors themselves.
The number of commitments which are antidotes
For the training of thoughts
Equals the number of sentient beings,
And the number of erroneous thoughts.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On "ultimate and relative enlightened mind" (don-dam-pa-dang kundzob byang-chub-kyi sems), see above Ch. 2. On the utpattikrama and sampannakrama, see Chs. 11-13. The nonduality of these two stages

indicates the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po).

[2]:

On the structure which refers to this tantra as that of Buddha-mind, see above, Introduction, pp. 33-36.

[3]:

On the five steps for the recitation of mantra, see above, pp. 850-851. under "five aspects of attainment according to the secret mantras."

[4]:

On the "four seals," see above. Ch. 8, pp. 711-745.

[5]:

The fifteenth day of the lunar calendar being dedicated to Śākyamuni Buddha. and the eighth to the eight Buddhas of medicine.

[6]:

Cf. Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 420, where this is considered as an alternative means of explaining the five basic commitments in an abbreviated form.

[7]:

The pañcakleśa of delusion, hatred, desire, pride and envy, as stated above, pp. 393-394 and in other tantras such as Guhyasamāja, are actually the pañcakula and pañcājñāna in their purified state. Cf. Lo-chen, op. cit., pp. 420-421. On the retaining of them as skillful means, in addition to the following explanation, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 131b-143a.

[8]:

N.L.

[9]:

This discussion is closely paralleled by the argument at the beginning of NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, p. 131b-132a.

[10]:

The "three supreme indestructible realities" (rdo-rje gsum mchog) are the Buddha-body, speech and mind.

[11]:

The five meats (sha-lnga) are enumerated in the following verses. The "gathering of Dākinīs" (mkha'-'gro 'du-ba) is one of the three "gatherings" connected with enlightened activity and its accomplishments, viz. "the

gathering of people during the day" (nyin-mor mi 'du-ba), the "gathering of Ḍākinīs by night" (mtshan-mor mkha-'gro 'du-ba), and "the gathering of material resources at all times" (rtag-tu zas-nor 'du-ba). See NSTB, glossary of enumerations. For examples of this gathering of Ḍākinīs consequent on the offerings of meat and nectar, see the life of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 238-277.

[12]:

N.L.

[13]:

in Lo-chen's view, op. cit., p. 425, each of the five basic commitments has two aspects of skillful means and discriminative awareness, making ten. Each of the five basic commitments also has thirty further aspects, (i.e. the ten ancillary aspects multiplied by Buddha-body, speech and mind)—making one hundred and sixty aspects altogether.

[14]:

Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 425, concurs with this enumeration of two hundred ancillary commitments (10 times 2 times 10), although he does not indicate the nature of their subdivisions.

[15]:

As indicated in the following line, Rong-zom-pa's view appears to be that the ten ancillary commitments subsume within them all the other members of this classification. both those forming the enumeration of 160 and those forming the enumeration of 200. The three hundred and sixty are not therefore distinct commitments. but attributes of the ancillary commitments. Lo-chen, op. cit., p. 425, advises those who wish to discover more about the 360 ancillary commitments to consult Līlāvajra's Samayānuśāyanirdeśa. P. 4745.

Commentary 1.3: The Benefits for one who has Guarded the Commitments

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[The Nature of Commitments which are to be Guarded (556.4-573.3):]

There are five aspects—verbal definition, classification, beneficial attributes, retributions exacted (for their violation), and their means of restoration.

[iii. The third aspect (of the nature of commitments to be guarded) concerns the benefits for one who has guarded the commitments, namely, that all purposes, provisional and conclusive, are accomplished.]

It says in the Array of the Three Commitments (dam-tshig gsum-bkod):

One who keeps the commitments of secret mantras,
(The vehicle of) indestructible reality.
Will fulfil all aspirations.
And will always be guarded by the deities.
The conquerors, supreme conquerors and their sons too
Assuredly think of that one as their son.
There are inestimable attributes of contemplation.
And one achieves the genuine awareness of Samantabhadra.

Commentary 1.4: Retribution exacted for not Guarding the Commitments

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[The Nature of Commitments which are to be Guarded (556.4-573.3):]

There are five aspects—verbal definition, classification, beneficial attributes, retributions exacted (for their violation), and their means of restoration.

[iv. The fourth, retribution exacted for not guarding (these commitments), occurs when one's excellent (pledges) have been violated and when one grants them to others with a defective attitude.]

The same text says:

When the commitments have been transgressed,
One's happiness consequently declines.
One experiences diverse unpleasant things
And abides for ten million "countless" aeons
In the suffering cause by terrestrial fires.

And in the All-Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

Just as sour milk, through its sourness
Makes all milk sour.
So does degeneration of a single Yogin
Adversely effect all Yogins.

Commentary 1.5: The means of Restoring the Commitments

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[The Nature of Commitments which are to be Guarded (556.4-573.3):]

There are five aspects—verbal definition, classification, beneficial attributes, retributions exacted (for their violation), and their means of

restoration.

[v. The fifth is the means of restoring (the commitments):]

Although there is no such method according to the pious attendants,
the secret mantras do possess the means capable of restoring (violations).
[1]

It says in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

If, when degeneration of commitments has occurred.
One understands the importance of pleasing one's venerable lord,
This (degeneration) becomes a source of fulfilment.
If one has abused one's guru and siblings,
And if, pleasing them during this very lifetime.
One is remorseful, with fervent confession,
That (abuse) becomes a supreme mode of fulfilment.
If one passes away from this life
Without having fulfilled (violations of commitments)
Relating to oneself or to one's guru and siblings,
One will transgress the bounds of fulfilment.
If one's pledge of Buddha-speech has been torn to shreds.
Meditate on oneself as Vajradharma,
And recite many hundreds of thousands of times
The pledge which one has lost.
If one's pledge of Buddha-mind has been torn to shreds.
Meditate on oneself as Vajrasattva,
And without speaking for three years.
Be well united in meditative concentration.
If ancillary pledges have been torn to shreds.
They are fulfilled by means of the different
Respective enlightened families (of deities).

So it is that purification occurs when one has practised fulfilment and confession, attempting to apply one's own body, speech and mind to the foremost commitments of Buddha-body, speech and mind, which have been violated and broken. This is the genuine skillful means, surpassing the lower (paths).

According to the code of vows upheld by the pious attendants, it appears that (degenerations) can be restored seven times if not kept secret, but if kept secret they cannot be restored even once, just like a broken clay vase. To Bodhisattvas, (this reparation) resembles a broken vase made of gemstones, because degenerations can be restored by relying on a spiritual benefactor. Just as a craftsman can (use the gemstones) to make a container superior to the previous one. According to the secret mantras, (degeneration) resembles a container of gemstones which has been broken, but can be restored by its own power. It is as if that which has been destroyed is rectified by its own creative energy without the need for a craftsman (mgar-ba mkhas-pa).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

However, it is stated below, pp. 1214-1216, that violations of vows held by Śrāvakas may be repaired seven times if openly confessed.

Commentary 2: Distinctions between Commitments and Vows

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[Distinctions between Commitments and Vows (573-3-574.5):]

The second part (of the overview—see p. 1189) concerns the distinctions between commitments and vows: Vows depend on the control over one's own mind whereas commitments are held by one who holds the three secret indestructible realities of the Buddhas and does not degenerate.[1] These resemble a vase which, having been created, both exists and is impermanent, i.e. they refer to different aspects of a single essence.

It says in the Propensity for the Commitments (P. 4745):

These three hundred and sixty (ancillary commitments)
Which oneself keeps by the three supreme indestructible realities
Are said to resemble the actual ground of the vows
Through which one does not lapse into error.

And in the Flash of Splendour (T. 830):

Because all things are primordially pure
Erroneous thoughts are primordially pure.
And indeed the vows are pure.
This is the most amazing commitment.

When this is appraised from the standpoint of the vows, there are three kinds, namely, the vows of prātimokṣa, Bodhisattva, and awareness-holder.
[2]

It says in the Indestructible Peak (T. 480):

There are the vows of prātimokṣa.
Those of the Bodhisattvas.
And of the mantras of the awareness-holders.

And in the Flash of Splendour:

There are monks, Bodhisattvas
And great Yogins, (masters) of Yoga.

Concerning the vows of prātimokṣa, one who desires peace and happiness for oneself alone should guard whichever of their seven kinds is appropriate for the duration of one's life.[3] The Bodhisattva vows bind the mind with moral discipline which has a dual purpose—they cause one

to attain realisation and extraordinary enlightened attributes through the gathering of the virtuous doctrine, and they benefit others by actions on behalf of sentient beings.[4] The vows of the awareness-holders bring a great wave of benefit for others and transform conflicting emotions into pristine cognition.[5]

It says in the All-Gathering Awareness (T. 831):

In this way the three kinds of vows
Are of great benefit to oneself and others.

Commitments, on the other hand, guard the nature of the three indestructible realities without degeneration, so that one is consequently and exclusively devoted to activity for the sake of others.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

i.e. "vows" (sdom-pa, Sanskrit saṃvara) pertain to the practice of the causal vehicles, while "commitments" (dam-tshig. Sanskrit samaya) maintain the practices of the resultant vehicles.

[2]:

On the detailed distinctions between and Integration of these three vows, see mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dBang-rgyal, sdom-gsum rnam-nges; also 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, shes-bya kun-khyab. Vol 2, pp. 34-204.

[3]:

The seven prātimokṣa vows (so-so thar-pa'i sdom-pa bdun), more usually forming an enumeration of eight, include the vows of laymen and laywomen (upāsaka and upasikā), those of male and female practitioners of the purificatory fast (upavāsa and upavāsī), the male and female novitiate (śramaṇera and śramaṇerikā), and the complete vows of monks and nuns (bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī). On the enumeration of seven, also see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. pp. 128ff.

[4]:

On the three aspects of moral discipline cultivated by Bodhisattvas, see below, p. 1222.

[5]:

These Include the categories of commitment maintained by adherents of the outer tantras, Kriyātantra, and so forth. See NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 213a-219b. They are contrasted immediately below with the commitments of Buddha-body, speech and mind, which are upheld from Mahāyoga onwards. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 221a-229b.

[Gathering the Three Trainings without Contradiction (574.5-578.2):]

Third (see p. 1189) there is a teaching on the gathering of the three trainings without contradiction. This has two parts, namely, the absence of contradiction and the means of gathering them. As to the first: One might think that these three kinds of vow are completely contradictory because for pious attendants the four inimical defeats (phas-pham-pa bzhi) are the basic (vows of prātimokṣa) to be guarded against,[1] and their branches include (vows) not to drink ale and so forth; and because for Bodhisattvas acts harmful to sentient beings are ostensibly opposed. If so, it is taught that these do not contradict (the commitments of secret mantras) for the following two reasons:

First there is no contradiction in the prātimokṣa vows of pious attendants because, when the defeat of murder occurs, four elements are required to complete it—the ground or the human being, the thought of hatred which freely incites murder when is not bewildered in other respects, the main part which is the impeding of the life-breath with weapons and so forth, and the aftermath or satisfaction. in this context (of the secret mantras) however, when the rites of "liberation" are performed, there is no defect at all because the aspect of the ground (of murder) is incomplete—the form (of the victim) is visualised as the syllable HUM, and because it is essentially uncreated, there is no human being, non-human animal or other creature. The aspect of the thought (of murder) is incomplete because one has compassion which desires to separate (the being) from suffering and the attitude of a willful murderer is not present; the aspect of the main part (of the murder) is also incomplete because there is neither an object to be killed, nor a subject which kills, so that there is neither life nor the killing of life; and the aspect of the conclusion (of the murder) is incomplete because afterwards there is no satisfaction motivated by hatred.[2]

Similarly when stealing occurs, the foundation is the need to acquire property as one's own possession. Here however (in the secret mantras), because oneself and others are realised to be without duality, one takes property which is self-manifesting in the manner of a dream, and rather than the need for the thought of theft, in this context there is no thought of theft because (the property) is simply the appearance of one's own mind, and is a self-manifesting display. As for the main part (of the action), quite apart from taking possession of (the property) by conceiving elaborately of its full value, that too is Incomplete. There is no conceptual elaboration because in the manner of an apparition or a dream there is no duality. As for the aftermath (of the theft), rather than having the thought that one has acquired something, here is no apprehension of an obtained object or an obtaining subject.

Again, when the defeat of sexual misconduct occurs, the foundation is the need for another man's woman and so forth. However in this context (of the rites of sexual union) the individual (Yogins and Yoginīs) are

creatively visualised as deities. Rather than the need for one who has inserted the penis into the vagina to experience a climax (bags-rim 'das-pa), (here) these two organs are visualised as a vajra and a lotus, and they are not therefore complete with Independently existing characteristics. Even the aspect of thought (associated with sexual misconduct), namely, the desire to experience bliss with an unbewildered attention is incomplete (in this context) because here (bliss) is known within the three maṇḍalas. [3] Therefore there is no defect. [4]

Then when lies are told, one has to convey a distorted perception to other beings, as when saying that one sees a deity though one actually does not. in this context, however, one knows that all phenomena are considered to be lies, and may be beneficially expressed for the sake of others. Therefore, there is no defect.

Similarly when ale is drunk, it is transformed (through the secret mantras) into nectar. The statement that it is Improper to taste ale is not contradicted.

In all these Instances (of vows relating to the four inimical defeats) It is necessary for oneself to be a monk, for the object not to be bewildering, and for perception not to be distorted. But here (in the secret mantras), the prātimokṣa vows of the pious attendants are not contradicted because phenomena are transformed into the maṇḍala of deities.

Secondly, (in the secret mantras) the vows of the bodhisattvas are not contradicted because they are retained by extraordinary compassion and skillful means which desire to benefit others.

These two qualities are also conferred on spiritual warriors, as is said in the following passage from the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas (T. 44):

The skillful means which genuinely acts on behalf of sentient beings
Is the supreme training for the conquerors' sons.
It is a great cloudburst which reaps an excellent harvest.

The means of gathering together (these vows within the secret mantras) are twofold. As to (the gathering of the vows) of pious attendants: Those vows which emphatically attain one's own benefit are gathered here (In the secret mantras) to bind the mind in order that the Yogin might be released from his own suffering. At the time when life is taken (by the rites of "liberation"), there are no non-virtuous thoughts of hatred and so forth. Indeed, the vow which renounces killing is actually subsumed in that rite in order to control one's own corrupt components with their individual characteristics. The remaining (prātimokṣa vows) are similarly incorporated. However coarse the conduct of skillful means may appear, all vows of the pious attendants are essentially and absolutely gathered because the corrupt components with their individual characteristics are under control. For example, when certain doctors prepare a cooling medication for the sickness of fever, they are opposed by some but benefit comes swiftly through the cure. Although these two seem contradictory there is in fact no contradiction. Likewise, although the skillful means of

the path appear contradictory, they are actually in complete harmony with the renunciation of conflicting emotions and the attainment of virtue in one's own mind.

The second means of gathering the vows together incorporates those of the Bodhisattvas. At the time when one engages in any conduct, the moral discipline of control is present because the willful indulgence of ordinary conflicting emotions is controlled. Dependent on this, the moral discipline which gathers virtuous doctrines is present because the enlightened attributes of the path are further increased. And, through that skillful means, the moral discipline of action on behalf of sentient beings is present because others are benefitted and taken into one's following.[5]

In this way, the vows of the secret mantras gather all these (vows) within them because mind-control and the purification of conflicting emotions are identical.

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these pham-pa'i sde-tshan bzhi, namely murder, sexual misconduct, theft and falsehood. see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, shes-bya kun-khyab, Vol. 2. pp. 52ff.

[2]:

On the pure view and practice of the rites of "liberation", see above Ch. 11, pp. 914-922. Ch. 18. pp. 1176-1179, Ch. 20. pp. 1258-1261.

[3]:

Tibetan dkyil-'khor gsum, i.e., those of the male consort, the female consort, and their coalescence.

[4]:

On the pure application of the sbyor-ba practices, see above Ch. 11, pp. 900-913. Ch. 13. 1006-1022.

[5]:

On these three aspects of moral discipline, viz. "gathering the virtuous doctrine" (dge-ba chos-sdud), "acting on behalf of sentient beings" (sems-can don-byed), and "controlling malpractices" (nyes-spyod sdom-pa'i tshul-khrims), see also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. pp. 127a-131b, under "moral discipline"; and on bodhisattva conduct in general see 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, shes-bya kun-khyab, Vol. 2, pp. 98-134.

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Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great commitments in order that mantra-adepts might succeed. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos sngags-'chang-rnams don-yod-par bya-ba'i phyir dam-tshig chen-po 'di ched-du brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (556.1-596.4):]

The fourth section (of the extensive exegesis of the means for attaining the maṇḍala of wrathful deities in accordance with the path—see p. 1147) concerns the sequence of commitments maintained by one who is committed. It has three subdivisions, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 19.1):]

Once the offerings and liberality had been explained, then the Transcendent Lord (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das) who is the Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) with respect to the nature of the great commitments, uttered this meaningful expression concerning the great commitments (dam-tshig chen-po'i 'di ched-du brjod-do) which are kingly and most secret in order that (phyir) Yogins who are adepts ('chang-rnams) of secret mantra (sngags) might succeed (don-yod-par bya-ba'i) in their aspirations by accomplishing the result swiftly and not falling into error.

[The second includes an overview and an interlinear commentary.]

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[Interlinear Commentary on the Commitments (578.2-596.2)]

The interlinear commentary (on this chapter) comprises a general teaching on the essence of the supreme commitments, and a particular exegesis of the structure (of commitments) to be attained and to be guarded.

[General Teaching on the Essence of the Supreme Commitments (578.3-583.5):]

[The former has three sections.]

[i. The superiority of the secret commitments to others (comments on Ch. 19.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.2]

When the unsurpassed vehicle is well ascertained,
All conflicting emotions and deeds are experienced,
Yet they are engaged, without being accumulated.
And they become the provisions.
This is the excellence of moral discipline and vows. [2]

[Tibetan]

bla-med theg-pa rab-nges-na /
nyon-mongs las-rnams kun-spyad-kyang /
byas-la mi-sog tshogs 'gyur-te /
tshul-khrims sdom-pa phun-sum-tshogs / [2]

Commentary:

[Interlinear Commentary on the Commitments (578.2-596.2)]

The interlinear commentary (on this chapter) comprises a general teaching on the essence of the supreme commitments, and a particular exegesis of the structure (of commitments) to be attained and to be guarded.

[General Teaching on the Essence of the Supreme Commitments (578.3-583.5):]

[The former has three sections.]

[i. The superiority of the secret commitments to others (comments on Ch. 19.2):]

When (na) the most secret unsurpassed vehicle (bla-med theg-par) is entered by any individual and is well ascertained (rab-nges) without error and experientially cultivated, all (kun) the five poisons or conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs) and the deeds (las-rnams) produced by them are experienced (spyad). Yet (kyang) these same deeds appear to be engaged (byas), without (la-mi) obscurations and propensities being accumulated (gsog), just as an apparitional phantom is experienced. in addition, they become ('gyur-te) the perfect two provisions (tshogs) of merit and pristine cognition. This is because in the essence of that experience the moral discipline (tshul-khrims) of prātimokṣa, the vows (sdom-pa) of the bodhisattvas, and the excellence (phun-sum tshogs) of the commitments of secret mantra are complete and perfect.

[ii. All Instructions and vows are shown to be gathered in the secret commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.3):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.3]

In the unsurpassed supreme commitments
Moral discipline through training.
And all the unthinkable vows that there are.
Without exception are all gathered and purified. [3]

[Tibetan]

bla-med mchog-gi dam-tshig-tu /
'dul-ba'i dbang-gis tshul-khrims-dang /
ji-snyed sdom-pa bsam-yas-pa /
ma-lus kun-'dus rnam-par dag / [3]

Commentary:

[ii. All Instructions and vows are shown to be gathered in the secret commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.3):]

In the (tu) most secret unsurpassed supreme commitments (bla-med mchog-gi dam-tshig), the prātimokṣa vows or moral discipline (tshul-khrims) structured through (-i dbang-gis) the training ('dul-ba) of misconduct, and (dang), exemplified thereby, the vows of the Bodhisattvas, and the enlightened attributes of all the unthinkable vows that there are (ji-snyed sdom-pa bsam-yas-pa) in the three outer classes of mantra along with the inner classes, without exception (ma-kus) are all (kun) progressively gathered ('dus); and even the most minute defects of those lower (vows) are purified (rnam-par-dag).

[iii. The structure of the supreme basic commitments has four parts of which the first concerns the taking of life (in the rite of "liberation". It comments on Ch. 19.4):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.4]

There is no reference to existence, non-existence, or the middle way.

Life is not existent, in a manner which resembles
An apparition and an optical illusion.
So there is in fact no taking of life.
Life and living creatures are merely misunderstandings, [4]

[Tibetan]

yod-med dbu-ma'ang mi-dmigs-shing /
sgyu-ma mig-yor lta-bu'i tshul /
srog-med srog-kyang gcod-du med /
srog-dang skyes-bu log-rtog-tsam / [4]

Commentary:

[iii. The structure of the supreme basic commitments has four parts of which the first concerns the taking of life (in the rite of "liberation". It comments on Ch. 19.4):]

Ultimately there is no reference to (mi-dmigs-shing) the extreme of eternalism which upholds the existence (yod) of phenomena, the extreme of nihilism which upholds their non-existence (med), or the middle way (dbu-ma'-ang) free from the two extremes. Relatively "liberation" ostensibly appears, in a manner (tshul) in which oneself, the subject, resembles (lta-bu'i) an apparition (sgyu-ma) and the sentient being (i.e. the object or victim) an optical illusion (mig-yor). However, from the very moment of this appearance, life (srog) is not truly existent (med) because sentient beings are without Independent characteristics. So there is in fact no taking of life (srog-kyang gcod-du med) because life lacks inherent existence, in the manner of a dream. Although there appear to be life and (srog-dang) living creatures (skyes-bu) who possess life, these are merely misunderstandings (log-rtog-tsam) of one's own bewildered mind, and otherwise there is actually no duality.

Accordingly, it says in the Sūtra Requested by Rāṣṭrapāla (T. 62):

Oneself, others, life and living creatures
Appear, though non-existent.
And are naturally without duality.
Apart from mere error itself, they are not extraneous.
But inauthentic, imaginary and apparitional.

And in the Sūtra Requested by Upāli from the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 68):

Just as though a sorcerer who has emanated
Many hundreds of sentient beings in the world
May slay all these emanations
Although, being apparitions, they are not at all slain.
These living beings have an apparitional nature.
Which is never referred to finitely.
Those who appreciate this infinity
Do not feel sensation in the world.
Those heroes who know this reality.

Without independent existence.
Pass beyond the world into nirvāṇa.
Though they experience the desired attributes.
They are without attachment.
Abandoning attachments, they instruct sentient beings.
And as lords among men they benefit sentient beings.

Concerning the purpose of this (rite of "liberation"), it says in the Supreme Tantra of Clear Expression (T. 369):

The learned should constrain and slay
Those who harm the Buddhas' teaching,
Those who perniciously try to abuse the Guru,
And those who try to harm sentient beings.

And:

The necessity for such rites of "liberation"
Is that the conduct of enlightenment increases.
Sentient beings are happy, the deity is pleased,
One's own commitments are fulfilled.
And the suffering caused by negative deeds
And obstacles is reduced.

Also in the Tantra of the Slayer of Death (T. 469, 473-5. 478):

Emaho! this murder is excellent.
This murder is not murder.

[The second concerns the taking of that which is not given. (It comments on Ch. 19.5):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.5]

Because the two truths are indivisible.
There is no difference, as in Nirmāṇarata.
Because there is nothing extraneous that is not given.
There is no taking.
All things are the expanse of the real. [5]

[Tibetan]

bden-pa gnyis-kar dbyer-med-pas /
'phrul-dga'i tshul-de tha-dad min /
gzhan-dang ma-byin med-pa'i phyir /

Commentary:

[The second concerns the taking of that which is not given. (It comments on Ch. 19.5):]

All things are not actually existant because (-pas) in the two truths (bden-pa gnyis-kar), relative and ultimate, their natures are indivisible (dbyer-med); and conventionally too they are not existant. As (tshul-de) the gods in Nirmāṇarata ('phrul-dga'i) who enjoy raptures of their own emanation, there is actually no difference (tha-dad-min) between objects which extraneously appear and the subject or oneself who takes them. Knowing this nature, when one takes that which is not given it resembles the self-manifest taking of a self-manifest object.[1] Because (-pa'i phyir) at that time there is nothing (med) to be taken that is not given (ma-byin) i.e. no object to be taken, no extraneous (gzhan-dang) sentient being, and nothing with individual characteristics to be appropriated thereby, there is indeed no taking (blangs-med) of that which is not given. This is because all things (thams-cad). illustrated by (the dichotomy of) objects or substances to be taken and the subject or self who takes them, are the primordially pure expanse of the real (nyid-kyi dbyings) sky-like nature.

Accordingly, it says in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

Just as in a dream there is an apparitional (subject)
Who takes an apparitional gemstone.
Although that is purposefully experienced,
There is no deed and no maturation.
Similarly, when one has refined this pristine cognition
Devoid of attachment.
One proceeds to supreme, genuine, and quiescent nirvāṇa.

The purpose of this taking (what is not given) is that the provisions of those who are rich are perfected, and the desires of the poor are attained.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

One should take wealth from the avaricious.
And give it to poor sentient beings.
Therefore steal the wealth of aristocrats and the rich.

[The third, concerning the telling of lies, (comments on Ch. 19.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Nirmāṇarata ('phrul-dga') is the penultimate realm of the kāmādhātu, See the chart in NSTB, Book 1, introduction.

Text 19.6 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.6]

Phenomena are like an apparition.

And they are lies to which names and words are applied.

They are themselves a lie, and when experienced as a lie.

There is nothing to be called a lie,

Even so much as a name. [6]

[Tibetan]

chos-rnams sgyu-ma lta-bu-la /
ming-dang tshig-tu brtags-pa rdzun /
bdzun-nyid la-ni rdzun-spyod-pa /
rdzun-zhes btags-tsam yod-ma-yin / [6]

Commentary:

[The third, concerning the telling of lies, (comments on Ch. 19.6):]

If one has an extraordinary need to benefit others, insofar as benefit is incurred, there is no defect, whatever one says. Accordingly, the phenomena (chos-rnams) subsumed within saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are naturally like an apparition (sgyu-ma lta-bu), dreamlike, and so forth. And (la) they are themselves lies (rdzun) to which different names and words are applied (ming-dang tshig-tu btags-pa) because their names are suddenly applied by particularising thought.

It says in the Intermediate Mother (T. 9):

Subhūti, all things are naturally without substance. Those things which are expressed and called appearances are fictions or lies because they are suddenly arisen.

If this is realised, the objects to whom (lies) are told are themselves a lie (rdzun-nyid) and (la-ni) the self or subject who tells them is also a lie. Therefore, when these are told and experienced as a lie (rdzun spyod-pa) in terms of existence, nonexistence and so forth, from this very moment there is nothing (yod ma-yin) to be called a lie (rdzun-zhes), either subject or object, even so much as a name (btags-tsam). This is because the outer and inner nature of sound does not exist in any respect, and its essence is the uncreated (coalescence of) sound and emptiness.

Accordingly, it says in the Sūtra Requested By Upāli (T. 68):

Just as a child bursts into tears
On being told to show and verbalise
The notion which it had held
And seeing thereby that it is spurious,

Similarly, in the case of Inconceivable Buddhas.
When skillful and learned sentient beings
Have acquired and fully understood all these phenomena,
They are shown (the teachings concerning)
The existence and non-existence of the world-systems.

What then is the purpose (of this)? It is stated in the previous source:

This is the commitment or wealth of the Guru
Which always acts on behalf of sentient beings.
In order to guard the lives of sentient beings
Even lies should be told.

[The fourth concerning sexual misconduct (comments on Ch. 19.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.7]

There is attachment to that which is without attachment.
But in this attachment, there is no attachment.
This is the supreme king of attachment.
It is the supremely great attachment. [7]

[Tibetan]

ma-chags-pa-la chags-pa-dang /
chags-pa-nyid-na chags-pa-med /
de-ni chags-mchog rgyal-po-ste /
shin-tu chags-pa chen-po yin / [7]

Commentary:

[The fourth concerning sexual misconduct (comments on Ch. 19.7):]

The nature of all things is emptiness, the abiding nature which is without attachment (ma-chags-pa) in any respect, and without even the slightest trace of substantial or symbolic existence. When that nature is realised intellectually, there is attachment to (-la chags-pa-dang) it. But in this attachment (chags-pa-nyid-na) to pristine cognition which occurs when the male and female consorts sexually unite through discriminative awareness in a disposition without the two extremes, there is no (med) ordinary desire or attachment (chags-pa). This is the (de-ni) nature of great skillful means or compassion. It reigns supreme (mchog) over one's own ordinary desire or attachment (chags), as a king of (rgyal-po-ste) pristine cognition where there is no duality of bliss and emptiness. This commitment of pure sexual conduct is (yin) the supremely (shin-tu) pure,

great attachment (chags-pa chen-po), the disposition of the enlightened family of the lotus which emerges as spirituality for the sake of sentient beings.

Accordingly, it says in the Pagoda of Precious Gems (T. 45-93):

Living creatures who adhere to desire
Indeed resemble an apparitional or dreamlike nature.
Essentially empty and without substance.
They have no deeds and no maturation.

The purpose (of this commitment) is stated in the previous source:[1]

In order to please the Buddhas.
To guard the commitments.
And to attain the secret mantras through awareness
One should adhere to the wives of others.

[Particular Exegesis of the Structure of the Commitments to be Attained and Guarded (583.5-596.2):]

The latter part (see p. 1223) is the particular exegesis of the structure (of commitments) to be attained and to be guarded. It has four sections, namely essence and verbal definition, benefits and retributions, natural expression and classifications, and an explanation of their great beneficial attributes.

[i. As to the essence and verbal definition, the former has two aspects, one of which concerns the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.8):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. from the Indestructible Reality of the Magical Net (sgu-'phrul rdo-rje, NGB. Vol. 15).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.8]

One should not abandon the unsurpassed.
One should venerate the Guru.
One should not interrupt the flow of mantras and seals.
One should have loving kindness
For those who enter the genuine path,
And one should not divulge the secret truths outside.
These are the five basic ones—

The supreme commitments to be attained and guarded. [8]

[Tibetan]

bla-med mi-spang bla-ma bkur /
sngags-dang phyag-rgya rgyun mi-gcod /
yang-dag lam-du zhugs-la byams /
gsang-ba'i don phyir smra mi-bya /
'di-ni rtsa-ba lnga-rnams-te /
sgrub-dang bsrung-ba'i dam-tshig mchog / [8]

Commentary:

[i. As to the essence and verbal definition, the former has two aspects, one of which concerns the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.8):]

The first basic commitment is that one should not abandon the (mi-spang) Three Precious Jewels, which are unsurpassed (bla-med) in the ground, path and result. The second is that one should venerate (bkur) the gurus with whom one has a connection through the doctrine or through commitments, and especially the Guru (bla-ma) of the secret mantras, (the vehicle of) indestructible reality.

Now, there is no more awesome guru than the one who has the following three qualities: the ability to confer empowerment, to explain the tantras, and to reveal the instructions. The mediocre type has two of these appropriate qualities including the ability to confer empowerment, and the somewhat less awesome type has one of these qualities, whichever is appropriate. The order in which they are venerated should also correspond (to these qualities). Those who have the three qualities—empowerment, exegesis and esoteric Instruction—are increasingly more awesome than those who have one or two of them. One should similarly know that gurus are increasingly awesome in the types of empowerment which they confer.[1]

The third is that over a period of time and with degrees of perseverance one should practise so as not (ml) to interrupt (gcod) the flow (rgyun) of the fivefold recitation, including the basic mantras (sngags) or unmistakable seeds of the deities present in any maṇḍala, and (dang) also the seals or handimplements (phyag-rgya) of the different deities which are secured by means of the four seals, namely those of commitment, doctrine, action and the great seal.

The fourth is that one should have loving kindness for those (-la byams) individuals who enter the genuine path (yang-dag lam-du zhugs), i.e. the greater vehicle. And the fifth is that one should not divulge (smra mi-bya) the secret truths (gsang-ba'i don) concerning the hidden and concealed view and conduct to those outside (phyir) who are unworthy recipients.

These ('di-ni) are the five basic ones (rtsa-ba lnga-rnams-te) among the commitments. The first three are the commitments to be attained (sgrub) and (dang) the last two are the supreme commitments (dam-tshig mchog) through which contradictions of the Buddha-mind are to be guarded

(bsrung-ba'i) against.[2]

[The second aspect refers to the ancillary commitments which are of two kinds.]

[Among them are the five commitments not to be renounced (which comment on Ch. 19.9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the grades of empowerment (dbang-bskur) according to Mahāyoga, from those of beneficence (phan-pa'i dbang) to those of profundity (zab-dbang), see above, Chs. 9-10.

[2]:

On this distinction, see also above, pp. 1202-1203.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.9]

One should not renounce delusion, desire.
Hatred, pride and envy. [9]

[Tibetan]

gti-mug chags-dang zhe-sdang-dang /
nga-rgyal phrag-dog mi-spong-ngo / [9]

Commentary:

[The second aspect refers to the ancillary commitments which are of two kinds.]

[Among them are the five commitments not to be renounced (which comment on Ch. 19.9):]

One should not (ml) ever renounce (spang-ngo) the delusion (gti-mug) which is non-conceptual in any respect, the desire (chags-dang) which is supreme bliss, the hatred (zhe-sdang-dang) which is supreme radiance, the pride (nga-rgyal) which is supreme pride (dregs-pa chen-po), and the envy (phrag-dog) which is supreme wrath, because they are the primordially pure ground, which is transformed into the path of skillful means, and which naturally arises as the resultant Buddha-body and pristine cognition.

[Secondly there are the five commitments to be acquired (which comment on Ch. 19.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.10]

One should not dispense with the white seminal fluid.
The red seminal fluid, the excrement, urine and human flesh.
Because they form a pure container.
These ten ancillary commitments
Are experienced by the realisation
Of their primordial purity and sameness. [10]

[Tibetan]

dkar-rtsi dmar-rtsi dri-sha chen /
dag-pa'i snod-pas [bcud/ chu] mi-dor-ro /
yan-lag bcu-yi dam-tshig-ste /
ye-nas dag-mnyam rtogs-pas spyad / [10]

Commentary:

[Secondly there are the five commitments to be acquired (which comment on Ch. 19.10):]

One should not dispense with (mi-dor-ro) the five kinds of pure-essence, namely those of the white seminal fluid (dkar-rtsi) or "enlightened mind", the red seminal fluid (dmar-rtsi) which is the blood of the lotus (vagina), the human excrement (dri-chen), urine (dri-chu) and human flesh (sha-chen). This is because (-pas) those essences which some hold to be dirty and which the intellect, in consequence of their opinion, knows as things to be renounced, form a pure (dag-pa'i) vacuous container (snod), according to the sacraments of commitment.

There are some who Interpret this verse to say that one should not dispense with (mi-dor) them because they form a primordially pure container and its contents (dag-pa'i snod-bcud); and others that one should not dispense with the pure sacraments of commitment and the skull-cup which is their container. They appear however to have misunderstood (the verse), which is in fact 32 understood by a reading of the text itself.

These are called the ten ancillary commitments (yan-lag bcu-yi dam-tshig ste) because they assist the basic ones, or emerge as their skillful means. If they are indulgently experienced, one becomes like ordinary beings, but by the realisation of (rtogs-pas) their primordial (ye-gnas)

presence as the three kinds of purity (dag) and four modes of sameness (mnyam),[1] their true natures are to be known, and they are experienced (spyad) by the retention of their respective skillful means.

[The latter or verbal definition has two aspects of which the first is the verbal definition of the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these axioms of "purity and sameness", see above. Ch. 11, section 15.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.11]

The five commitments to be attained and guarded
Are the basic ones through (degeneration of) which
One is deprived of the enlightened family. [11]

[Tibetan]

bsrung-zhing sgrub-pa'i dam-tshig lnga /
rtsa-ba yin-te rigs-med 'gyur / [11]

Commentary:

[The latter or verbal definition has two aspects of which the first is the verbal definition of the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.11):]

The five commitments to be guarded and attained (bsrung-zhing sgrub-pa'i dam-tshig lnga) are the basic ones (rtsa-ba yin-te) among the commitments through which the secret mantras are to be attained. When they are guarded in the manner of the roots of a tree, accomplishments emerge, but on their degeneration, one is deprived of (med-'gyur) the enlightened family (rigs) of the greater vehicle, or the fortune associated with manifest awakening.

Now according to these words, one is not deprived perpetually of the enlightened family or good fortune, but one's (unfortunate) circumstances are merely prolonged. This is because (the enlightened family) gives birth to the seed of liberation, and because it is impossible to belong to a cut-off family.[1]

As for the term "enlightened family", the vehicle of dialectics holds it to be the virtuous seed of the beginningless expanse of reality.[2]

It says in the Sūtra Which Reveals the Nucleus:

The expanse of beginningless time
Is the abode of all phenomena.
If this is present, all living beings
Will obtain nirvāṇa.

This enlightened family is present in two modes—as reality and as apparent reality,[3] on which the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024, Ch. 1, v. 149) says:

One should know this enlightened family to be twofold:
One similar to treasure and the other to a fruit tree.
The (first) is that which naturally abides without beginning,
And (the second) is supreme through having been genuinely acquiree

The former refers to the mind-as-such, the genuine ground-of-all, which is primordially and naturally pure, and inwardly radiant.

As is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle:

Thus, as a precious treasure within the mind.
Reality is indeed immaculate,
Neither to be clarified nor established.

In addition to the genuine ground-of-all, apparitional reality is held, in the manner of the seeds of a tree, to be beginninglessly present in the nature of the subtlest objects which may emerge as the buddhas' major and minor marks and their rays of light; and through the refinement of which the Buddha-body of form emerges.

The same text says:

Just as the imperishable seeds and shoots
Present in fruits such as the mango.
Gradually take form as the kingly objects of fruit trees
By ploughing. Irrigation and so forth.
The virtuous seed of the doctrine abides
Within the skin of ignorance and so forth
Which are the fruits of sentient beings.
Indeed, by relying on that virtuous seed,
Beings are gradually transformed
Into their true nature, the King of Sages.

Through the first (of these two enlightened families) the Buddha-body of reality is produced, and through the second the Buddha-body of form is produced.

The same text says:

The three bodies of the Buddhas are held to be obtained
Through these two enlightened families.

The first Buddha-body emerges through the first (family)
While the last two emerge through the second (family).

Therefore when the enlightened family which is present in the ground is awakened, one has the good fortune to cultivate an enlightened attitude and to attain the path.

As for the signs that one has awoken to the first enlightened family, it says in the Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861, Ch. 6, v. 4-5c):

One who, having heard about emptiness
Even as an ordinary person.
Experiences, within, sheer delight again and again.
And who, owing to this delight, is brought to tears.
And whose body hair stands erect,
Has the seed of intelligence which attains to perfect Buddha-hood.
That one is a vessel for this very instruction.
To whom the ultimate truth should be revealed.

And concerning the signs that one has awoken to the second family, the previous text (Ornament of the Sūtras of the Greater Vehicle, T. 4020, Ch. 3, v. 5) says:[4]

Even prior to practice,
Correct conduct with respect to compassion,
Vollition, patience and virtue.
Is truly explained to be a sign of that family.

Concerning this enlightened family: The adherents of the secret mantras hold that Buddha-body, pristine cognition and Buddha-field are primordially and spontaneously present, and that all phenomena are not without primordial Buddha-hood. This resembles the sun that is obscured by clouds, or the gemstone that is covered by mud.

As our text says, in the passage beginning (Ch. 2.2):

The aspects of the component of indestructible reality...

And (continuing down to Ch. 2.2):

Phenomena extraneous to the Buddhas themselves
Have not been found by the buddhas themselves.

Accordingly, it is held that the suddenly arisen and imaginary stains themselves are liberated in pristine cognition, just as ice melts into water.

It says in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

The five conflicting emotions are the five pristine cognitions,
The three spheres of existence are Sukhāvati.

This nature is also described in the Sūtras of definitive meaning belonging to the final transmitted precepts.[5]

It says for example in the Sūtra of the Nucleus of the Tathāgata (T. 258):

It is just as a man's pot of gold may fall into mire.
But however many years it remains there.
Its apparent reality is imperishable,
And then the sods, seeing it with their divine sight,
Say to others, in order that it might be cleansed:
Herein is contained the most precious sold.
You should cleanse it!
Similarly, though all sentient beings persistently perceive
With conflicting emotions for a long time,
I know these to be suddenly arisen conflicting emotions,
And reveal the doctrine of skillful means
In order to refine their true nature.

Therefore, even though one does not really degenerate from this enlightened family, one is said to do so because, according to the Yogācāra or Mind Only School, one temporarily degenerates from that family in which the path is attained.[6]

[The second, concerning the verbal definition of the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.12):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the absence of a "cut-off" family (agotraka, Sanskrit rigs-med-pa). see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 95b-106b.

[2]:

Tibetan thog-ma med-pa'i chos-khams dge-ba sa-bon is a synonym for dharmakāya. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 95bff.

[3]:

Corresponding to the dharmakāya and the rūpakāya respectively, these are known as chos-nyid rang-bzhin gnas-pa'i rigs and chos-can rang-bzhin gnas-pa'i rigs. See references in previous two notes.

[4]:

Cf. NSTB. Book 1. Pt. 3. PP. 96b-97a.

[5]:

I.e those belonging to the third dharmacakrapravartana, See NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 3. pp.66b-68b. 92a-95b. 116b-118a.

[6]:

This refers, in the view of Great Madhyamaka or Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, to the division of the "enlightened family" (gotra) into that "which naturally abides" (rang-bzhin gnas-pa'i rigs) as the "causal basis of separation" (bral-rgyu) from obscuration, and the "enlightened family of Inner growth" (rgyas-'gyur-gyi rigs) through which the culminating "result of separation" (bral-'bras) from obscuration takes effect. See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 95b-106b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.12]

The two (groups)—the five which are not to be renounced,
And five not to be dispensed with
Are the ancillary commitments, hard to transgress. [12]

[Tibetan]

mi-spang mi-dor lnga-gnyis-ni /
yan-lag dam-tshig 'da'-dka'o / [12]

Commentary:

[The second, concerning the verbal definition of the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.12):]

The two (gnyis-ni) groups, consisting of the five which are not to be renounced (mi-spang) and the five (lnga) commitments not to be dispensed with (mi-dor lnga) are called the ancillary commitments (yan-lag dam-tshig) because they are required as an aid for the attainment of the basic (commitments). They are extremely hard to transgress ('da'-dka'-o) because their awesome nature is necessarily equal to that of the basic ones, like the ditch around a fortified enclosure.

[ii. The second section (of the particular exegesis) concerns the benefits and retributions (associated with those commitments).]

[It has two parts, of which the former concerns the benefits for one who keeps them. (It comments on Ch. 19.13):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.13]

If one maintains the commitment of sameness
Which unites in sameness,
One will obtain the Great Perfection of sameness.
But if one transgresses it, one will not obtain Buddha-hood. [13]

[Tibetan]

mnyam-la mnyam-par sbyor-ba-yi /
mnyam-pa'i dam-tshig-la gnas-na /
mnyam-rdzogs chen-po thob-gyur-bas /
'das-nas sangs-rgyas ma-yin-no / [13]

Commentary:

[It has two parts, of which the former concerns the benefits for one who keeps them. (It comments on Ch. 19.13):]

This great commitment of sameness (mnyam-pa'i dam-tshig) is the nature which unites (mnyam-par sbyor-ba-yi) one through the skillful means of the path and profound discriminative awareness in (la) the truth that all things are sameness (mnyam) in the primordial Buddha-hood of Buddha-body and pristine cognition. If one maintains (-la gnas-na) it, one will obtain (thob-gyur) Buddha-hood, the Great Perfection (rdzogs-pa chen-po) spontaneous in its attributes of sameness (mnyam), where the resultant three Buddha-bodies are without conjunction or disjunction. Therefore this commitment is indeed to be guarded. But (-bas) if one transgresses this ('das-na) commitment, one will not obtain Buddha-hood (sangs-rgyas ma-yin-no). So it is not to be transgressed, just as one finds happiness by maintaining the laws of a king, but is punished when one transgresses them.

[The latter, the retribution exacted for degeneration (of the commitments), has two aspects.]

[The first concerns the harm which degeneration and obscuration bring to others when the defects of degeneration occur in the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.14):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.14]

Do not speak even for an instant or a moment
To those apathetic persons

Whose basic commitments have degenerated.

And who do not try to restore them.

The defects of those who have degenerated are indescribable. [14]

[Tibetan]

rtsa-ba nyams-pa'i phyal-ba-dag /
gso-la nye-bar mi-brtson-dang /
skad-cig yud-tsam smra ma-byed /
nyams-gyur nyes-pa brjod mi-lang / [14]

Commentary:

[The latter, the retribution exacted for degeneration (of the commitments), has two aspects.]

[The first concerns the harm which degeneration and obscurity bring to others when the defects of degeneration occur in the basic commitments. (It comments on Ch. 19.14):]

Do not befriend even for an instant (skad-cig), or do not speak (smra ma-byed) conversationally even for a moment (yud-tsam) to those persons (dag) whose basic commitments have degenerated (rtsa nyams-pa'i) and who, being apathetic (phyal-ba), have rejected their training and vows, and (dang) do not try (nye-bar mi-brtson) through skillful means to restore them (gso-la).

Why so, you may ask? It is because the defects of those who have degenerated are indescribable (nyams-gyur nyes-pa brjod mi-lang)—in this life they undergo various undesirable conditions of sickness, affliction and so forth, and in the next they must equally proceed to the hells. Thus one is said to degenerate through association with (such persons).

There are some who say that one should additionally not drink the water in a place frequented by such persons, but that is not intended here. The lower classes of secret mantras are increasingly more restrictive and the higher ones are increasingly more open. Therefore the limits of the commitments to be guarded change correspondingly. According to the Kriyātantra, it is explained that one should not drink water in a place frequented by (violators of the commitments).

It says in the Array of Commitments (dam-tshig bkod-pa):

Extraordinary among the Kriyātantras
Is the commitment not to drink water
In a place frequented (by violators).

According to Ubhayatantra one should not see (such a violator) even though one lives in the same place. According to Yogatantra, one should not meet him even though one does see him. According to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga, one should not speak to him even though one meets him, but it is not said to be a defect simply to live in the same place.[1]

[The second concerns the defects of deseneration which oneself incurs (with respect to the basic commitments. It comments on Ch. 19.15):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the differing attitudes expressed with respect to violations of the commitments in these different vehicles, see the recapitulation of the resultant vehicles in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 211b-229b.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.15]

If one's basic commitments have degenerated.

All that one would attain is reversed.

And one acquires against one's will

Diversified and unpleasant results. [15]

[Tibetan]

rtsa-ba'i dam-tshig nyams-gyur-na /

sgrub-pa thams-cad log-par 'gyur /

yid-du mi-'ong sna-tshogs-pa'i /

'bras-bu mi-'dod bzhin-du 'du / [15]

Commentary:

[The second concerns the defects of deseneration which oneself incurs (with respect to the basic commitments. It comments on Ch. 19.15):]

If one's basic commitments have degenerated (rtsa-ba'i dam-tshig nyams-gyur-na) all that one would attain (sgrub-pa thams-cad) is reversed (log-par-'gyur), as if drought were to occur when it rains, or a magical spell which one has cast were to backfire. One acquires ('du) powerlessly and against one's will (mi-'dod bzhin-tu) the suffering of provisional and conclusive results ('bras-bu) produced by deseneration of the commitments of a diversified (sna-tshogs-pa'i) nature, which are unpleasant (yid-du mi-'ong) for oneself. These include all sorts of unpleasant experiences—in this life one has all the undesirable experiences of poverty, sickness, ailments caused by spirits, affliction, and shortening of the lifespan; and in the next life one falls into the hells and endures suffering for many aeons.

[The next, concerning the defect of degeneration in the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.16):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.16]

If one's ancillary commitments have degenerated,
There is no result, and one falls into evil destinies. [16]

[Tibetan]

yan-lag dam-tshig nyams-gyur-na /
'bras-bu med-cing ngan-song ltung / [16]

Commentary:

[The next, concerning the defect of degeneration in the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.16):]

If one's ancillary commitments have degenerated (yan-lag dam-tshig nyams-gyur-na), in this life there is no (med) supreme or common accomplishment at all, i.e. no result ('bras-bu) of attainment, and (cing) in the next life one falls into evil destinies (ngan-song ltung).

It says accordingly in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

Through the degeneration of commitments one goes downhill.
In this life, too, there is no positive result.

[iii. The third section (of the particular exegesis), the exegesis of their natural expression and classification, has two aspects, among which the former is the natural expression of the commitments, (commenting on Ch. 19.17):]

[Read next page]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.17]

Commitments are the supreme indestructible realities.
They are the identity of all the Buddhas. [17]

[Tibetan]

dam-tshig-rnams-ni rdo-rje che /
sangs-rgyas kun-gyi bdag-nyid yin / [17]

Commentary:

[iii. The third section (of the particular exegesis), the exegesis of their natural expression and classification, has two aspects, among which the former is the natural expression of the commitments, (commenting on Ch. 19.17):]

Basic and ancillary commitments are (dam-tshig-rnams-ni) the essence of the supreme Indestructible realities (rdo-rje che) of buddha-body, speech and mind. They are the (yin) genuine identity of all the buddhas (sangs-rgyas kun-gyi bdag-nyid). Therefore it is appropriate that benefits emerge when they are guarded, and great retributions when they degenerate.

The latter is their classification, which is in two sections, namely the classification of enumerated (commitments) and the classification of inconceivable (commitments).

[The first comprises two aspects, of which the former, concerning the classification of the basic commitments (comments on Ch. 19.18):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.18]

Among the five basic commitments

Each has two and then thirty subdivisions. [18]

[Tibetan]

rtsa-ba'i dam-tshig lnga-la-ni /

gcig-la'ang gnyis-dang bcu-phrag gsum / [18]

Commentary:

[The latter is their classification, which is in two sections, namely the classification of enumerated (commitments) and the classification of inconceivable (commitments).]

[The first comprises two aspects, of which the former, concerning the classification of the basic commitments (comments on Ch. 19.18):]

Among the five basic commitments (rtsa-ba'i dam-tshig lnga-la ni), each (gcig-la) of them—for example, not to abandon the unsurpassed—has two (-'ang gnyis) basic divisions of skillful means and discriminative awareness, and then (dang) these two each have the three subdivisions of Buddha-

body, speech and mind, making six; while each of these (six) also has five subdivisions corresponding to Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Combined in this way, there are thirty subdivisions (bcu-phrag gsum) of the basic commitments.[1]

[The latter, concerning the classification of the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.19):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. each of the five basic commitments has thirty sub divisions. See also above, pp. 1211-1212, and note 14.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.19]

Among the two groups of five ancillary commitments
Each also has twenty subdivisions. [19]

[Tibetan]

yan-lag dam-tshig lnga-gnyis-la /
gcig-la'ang bcu-phrag gnyis-su dbye / [19]

Commentary:

[The latter, concerning the classification of the ancillary commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.19):]

Among the two groups of five ancillary commitments (yan-lag dam-tshig lnga-gnyis-la), i.e. the ten which are exemplified by the commitment not to renounce desire, each (gcig-la) one also (-'ang) has twenty subdivisions (bcu-phrag gnyis-su dbye): for each has skillful means and discriminative awareness, while skillful means includes five pristine cognitions and their five objects, and discriminative awareness includes five pristine cognitions and their five objects; making twenty altogether. [1]

[The second, the inconceivable classification, has two aspects of which the former reveals that commitments are inconceivable because apparent reality is inconceivable. (It comments on Ch. 19.20):][2]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

I.e. each of the ten ancillary commitments has twenty subdivisions. See above, p. 1212, and note 15.

[2]:

This section is known as the appendix of commitments in four pādas.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.20]

These commitments are most amazing.

In the ten directions of the six world-systems

Commitments are emanated which equal the number

Of the living beings in the three spheres of existence.

In order to train their thoughts. [20]

[Tibetan]

dam-tshig 'di-ni rmad-po-che /

'jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu-na /

srid-gsum 'gro-ba ji-snyed-pa /

rtog-'dul dam-tshig de-snyed spro / [20]

Commentary:

[The second, the inconceivable classification, has two aspects of which the former reveals that commitments are inconceivable because apparent reality is inconceivable. (It comments on Ch. 19.20):][1]

These ('di-ni) basic and ancillary commitments (dam-tshig) are wondrous and most amazing (rmad-po-che) because they instruct the world-systems of living beings in the great pristine cognition. It is taught that, just as sentient beings are infinite, the three hundred and sixty subdivisions of the commitments which relate to each of these beings become as many as the number of beings, so that they too are infinite. in the ten directions of the six world-systems ('jig-rten drug-gi phyogs-bcu-na) basic and ancillary commitments (dam-tshig) are emanated (spro) which equal (de-snyed) the number of living beings ('gro-ba ji-snyed-pa) subsumed in the three spheres of existence (srid-gsum 'gro-ba) in order to train ('dul) their thoughts (rtog), which are as many in number. Thus they are inconceivable as the expanse of space or the expanse of reality.

There are some who explain that there are dissimilar kinds of commitments, equal in number to the multifarious thoughts of sentient beings, but that is not intended here. It is contradicted because one aspires to these commitments immediately after, and in consequence of, the

explanation of the basic and ancillary commitments.[2]

[The second reveals that the commitments are inconceivable because reality is inconceivable. (It comments on Ch. 19.21):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This section is known as the appendix of commitments in four pādas.

[2]:

As emphasised by Rong-zom-pa (above, p. 1212), the enumeration of three hundred and sixty is not one of distinct or dissimilar commitments, but rather one comprising the attributes of the ten ancillary commitments.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.21]

Moreover the seal of Samantabhadra the supreme conqueror
In which all things are present without exception
Is accomplished in all that is genuine, without attainment.
Such (commitments) are infinitely supreme. [21]

[Tibetan]

gzhan-yang rgyal-mchog kun-bzang-gi /
thams-cad ma-lus phyag-rgya-yis /
sgrub-byed dam-pa ma-lus 'grub /
de-la-sogs-pa mtha'-yas mchog / [21]

Commentary:

[The second reveals that the commitments are inconceivable because reality is inconceivable. (It comments on Ch. 19.21):]

Apart from this teaching that there are commitments which equal the categories of apparent reality, there is moreover (gzhan-yang) the sky-like seal (phyag-rgya) in which all things without exception are (thams-cad ma-lus) gathered without duality in the supreme display of the effortless Samantabhadra (kun-bzang-gi). He is the supreme conqueror (rgyal-mchog), in whom all things of phenomenal existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa transcend renunciation, acceptance and limits to be guarded because they are primordially without acceptance or rejection. This nature is without (med) fabrication, laborious attainment (sgrub), hope and doubt; and it is accomplished in ('grub) all that is genuine (dam-pa), the supreme nucleus

of all the commitments without exception (ma-lus). Therefore It should be known as the disposition of the Great Perfection, the abiding nature, devoid of fabrication, corruption, hope and doubt with respect to the real.

It also says in the All-Accomplishing King (T. 828):

O! I, the all-accomplishing king, teacher of teachers.
Understand that all things are one
In the basic enlightened mind.
And that all things are indeed
The unique commitment of the nucleus.
Transcending objects which are or are not to be guarded.

O! the commitments of the all-accomplishing king's view
Are uncreated, like space transcending direction.
Thus, one who well understands them
Realises the commitment of the all-accomplishing king.

O! Just as all things are one in basic mind
They are one in the basic commitment, without being guarded.

O! This commitment which is the intention of mine, the all-accomplishing king,
Becomes naturally present through unwavering recollection As the actual pristine cognition,
Unfabricated and uncreated by anyone at all.
Empowered by awareness.
It is neither to be guarded, nor not to be guarded.

All things in their entirety which accordingly appear
Are empowered by radiance in the naturally present nucleus.
And then, created by the all-accomplishing king,
All things transcend the range of awareness and ignorance.
This is the commitment where there is nothing
To be transcended, violated, or limits to be guarded.

Therefore, the commitment of the genuine abiding nature is contemplation—indescribable, unteachable, without characteristics, and unchanging in primordial reality throughout the three times.

Such (de-la sogs-na) commitments transcending objects of thought, expression and reference are essentially the abiding nature of Infinitely supreme (mtha'-yas mchog) genuine Great Perfection. All commitments are dispositionally gathered within these commitments even when they are not yet attained.

Concerning these enlightened attributes, it says in the Tantra of the Open Space of the Sky (nam-mkha' klong-yangs-kyi rgyud):

Just as a man who finds precious jewels
Has no need for mundane commerce,
If, without meditating, the meaning of mind is realised,
All enlightened attributes without exception

Are spontaneously present.
The commitment is not to transgress this.

[iv. The fourth section is the detailed exegesis of great enlightened attributes which has five aspects.]

[Among them the first concerns praise and veneration by mundane beings. (It comments on Ch. 19.22):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.22]

One who holds the supreme awareness of the conquerors
Is venerated by mundane lords and their retinues. [22]

[Tibetan]

rgyal-ba'i rigs-mchog 'dzin-pa-de /
'jig-rten gtso-dang 'khor-gyis bkur / [22]

Commentary:

[Among them the first concerns praise and veneration by mundane beings. (It comments on Ch. 19.22):]

One who (de) holds ('dzin-pa) the secret mantras, the supreme awareness of the conquerors (rgyal-ba'i rigs-mchog) and keeps the commitments, is praised, venerated (bkur), and honoured by (gyis) mundane lords ('jig-rten gtso) such as Brahmā and Śatakratu and their retinues (dang 'khor).

[The second concerning the blessing granted by sublime beings (comments on Ch. 19.23):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.23]

One is intentionally consecrated as a son or brother
By the genuinely supreme ones and the genuine ones. [23]

[Tibetan]

dam-pa mchog-dang dam-pa-yis /
sras-dang spun dgongs byin-gyis rlob / [23]

Commentary:

[The second concerning the blessing granted by sublime beings (comments on Ch. 19.23):]

One is considered Intentionally (dgongs) and consecrated (byin-gyis rlob) by the genuinely supreme ones (dam-pa mchog) among gods and humans, who are central deities and buddhas, and (dang) by the genuine ones (dam-pa-yis) or terrestrial Bodhisattvas who are their sons. in this way, through their Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes, and activities, one attains the pure essential nature as a senior son (sras) or brother (-dang spun).

[The third, concerning the beneficial attributes of one who has attained the perceptual range of the conqueror, (comments on Ch. 19.24):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.24]

Those who enter the range of the Sugatas themselves
Unite with fearless Samantabhadra. [24]

[Tibetan]

bde-gshegs-nyid-kyi yul-la bzhugs /
'jigs-med kun-tu bzang-por sbyor / [24]

Commentary:

[The third, concerning the beneficial attributes of one who has attained the perceptual range of the conqueror, (comments on Ch. 19.24):]

Those who have kept the commitments enter the (la-zhugs) perceptual range of the sugatas themselves (bde-gshegs nyid-kyi yul) as the three kinds of awareness-holders, namely, those who enter into that level, those who abide on it, and those who are mature on it. Finally they unite with (sbyor) and obtain (the nature of) supreme Samantabhadra (kun-tu bzang-por) who is fearless ('jigs-med) with respect to all things.

Now, Samantabhadra is explained to be the resultant buddha who is

fearless with respect to the two obscurations, the four demons, the dichotomy of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and anything that is to be known. The awareness-holders who enter into that level are those who, entering the maṇḍala, first receive the creation and perfection stages. The awareness-holders who abide on that level are those who have obtained realisation and contemplation, and who then continually abide therein. The awareness-holders who are mature on that level are those who have become most powerful through that very attainment. Once one has obtained the status of an (awareness-holder) of maturation, of power over the lifespan, and of the great seal, one unites with and obtains (the status of) an awareness-holder of spontaneous presence.[1]

[The fourth, concerning the beneficial attributes of one who has gathered the enlightened attributes of vows and commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.25):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the four kinds of Vidyādhara, see also above, pp. 810-811, 853-854. and 959-976.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.25]

The reality just as it is.

The skillful means which grant instruction.

And all the unthinkable vows that there are

Are without exception pure and spontaneously present. [25]

[Tibetan]

ji-bzhin-nyid-dang 'dul-ba'i thabs /

ji-snyed sdom-pa bsam-yas-pa /

ma-lus rnam-dag lhun-gyis grub / [25]

Commentary:

[The fourth, concerning the beneficial attributes of one who has gathered the enlightened attributes of vows and commitments, (comments on Ch. 19.25):]

Among the unsurpassed commitments, the sky-like reality just as it is (ji-bzhin-nyid-dang) or the abiding nature of all things, along with the meanings of all the vehicles or skillful means which grant instruction ('dul-ba'i thabs) to sentient beings, and all kinds of all the unthinkable vows that

there are (ji-snyed sdom-pa bsam-yas-pa) including those of the pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and awareness-holders are without exception (ma-lus) progressively gathered, just as small measures of grain (phul) are scooped up into greater measures (bre-mig-tu):[1] and their enlightened attributes are without exception [pure and] spontaneously present ([rnam-dag] lhun-gyis grub).

[The fifth concerns the beneficial attributes of beings able to restore (the commitments) though they have degenerated. (It comments on Ch. 19.26):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan yar-ldan-gyi tshul bre-mig-tu phul-ltar 'dus. According to bod-rgya tshig-mdzod chen-mo, there are six phul in one bre. The bre is said in the same source to be a square measuring container, twenty of which comprise "one load" (khal-gcig).

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.26]

If there is degeneration,
It is perfected through rites of fulfilment.
Such (benefits) are infinitely supreme. [26]

[Tibetan]

nyams-na bskangs-pas rdzogs-pa-dang /
de-la-sogs-pa mtha'-yas mchog / [26]

Commentary:

[The fifth concerns the beneficial attributes of beings able to restore (the commitments) though they have degenerated. (It comments on Ch. 19.26):]

If there is degeneration (nyams-na) of the basic and ancillary commitments, it is restored and perfected (rdzogs-pa-dang) as before through rites of fulfilment (bskangs-bas). These are effected not by the discipline of the pious attendants which cannot repair them, as if they were a broken clay vase, but by receiving empowerment, confession and so forth.[1] Such (de-la-sogs-pa) benefits are present in the infinitely supreme (mtha'-yas mchog) secret mantras.

[Summary of the Chapter (596.2-596.4)]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 19.27):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above, pp. 1214-1217.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.27]

At these words, the Tathāgatas themselves bowed to the Tathāgata himself. [27]

[Tibetan]

—ces brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la
['dud-par] 'dul-bar gyur-to / [27]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 19.27):]

At these words (-ces-brjod-pas), the hosts of the self-manifesting Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) themselves (nyid) bowed to ('dud-pa ['dul-bar] gyur-to) the Tathāgata (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) Samantabhadra himself (nyid) who is the lord of the maṇḍala.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 19.28):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 19.28]

This completes the nineteenth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled Commitments. [28]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las dam-tshig-gi le'u-ste

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 19.28):]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the nineteenth chapter (le'u-ste bcu-dgu-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of commitment Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa), entitled (-gi) a teaching on the meaning of the basic and ancillary Commitments (dam-tshig).

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Then the Tathāgata, Transcendent Lord and Great Joyous One, became absorbed in the contemplation called "the consecration of the spontaneous commitment", and uttered these meaningful expressions. [1]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings
(In the shape of) the syllable E,
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of wrath
To the awesome, and most fierce blaze.
Even the body of a Buddha with its merits will be destroyed. [2]

A symbolic representation (of the victim),
With the five nectars or five edibles.
Should be prepared with the name attached.
Once (the victim) has been summoned.
Stab the effigy with the kila of indestructible reality—
Reduced to atomic particles,
It should be offered to the assembled host. [3]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable E
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
Then, sealed, (their bodies) shake and move
Throughout the ten directions.
Whereupon (the victim) becomes insane.
Bursts asunder, and is Incinerated. [4]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings
In the shape of the syllable VAM,
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of attachment
To the resplendent and enormous blaze.
Even indestructible speech will be subjugated. [5]

A symbolic representation (of the victim)
With the five nectars or five edibles
Should be prepared with name attached.
Stab the effigy with the kila of indestructible desire
And offer it to the assembled host of desire
Until it has vanished. [6]

In the maṇḍala of the feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable VAM,
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain,
Then, summoned, even Vajra-(padma) becomes an attendant.
Whatever one desires will similarly come to pass. [7]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable MA
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of joy To the blaze that is absorbed
And emanated with great brilliance.
Enlightened attributes will equal the limits of space. [8]

A symbolic representation with name attached,
With the five nectars or five edibles
Should be prepared and conceived

As a wish-fulfilling treasure of attributes.
Stab this effigy with the kīla of joyous pride,
And indestructible brilliance will multiply. [9]

In the maṇḍala of the feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable MA
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
They shake, and emit great magical transformations
of blazing brilliance.
Space becomes filled with wish-fulfilling (gems). [10]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable YA
Which shines forth as luminous brilliance
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of clarity.
Even beings of most awesome ferocity will become lustrous. [11]

(A symbolic representation) with the five nectars or five edibles
Is conceived as an essence of disturbing awesome ferocity.
Stab this effigy with the kīla of lustrous radiance.
Offer it to the assembled host of blazing lustre. [12]

In the maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable YA,
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
They fill that blazing (fire)
With the blessing of their lustre.
All things are rendered undisturbed. [13]

One should make offerings to the retainers,
The hosts of their concubines, and female servants,
Who desire to be given the residual offering.
One should proclaim well their commitments,
And then command them to perform
The rites which they desire: [14]

Swiftly actualise without impediment
The oaths which you pledged and upheld
When in the past the Great Glorious Heruka,
Most malignant, fierce and fearful.
Had most amazing power and blessing
Which disciplined you all, without exception.
He overpowered Mahādeva and so forth.
Making you, their retainers, into his Īśvarīs and retainers,
And he assigned you your different rites.
If you do not act as you have pledged.
Like those who have sworn and then transgressed
Their oaths of allegiance.
If you transgress this commitment
May the Wrathful Yakṣa sever your very heads.
Bodies and hearts into seven pieces.
Rather, may you perform the tasks

With which you are charged
By this Yogin who holds the mantras.
If you do not actualise these activities,
Which you yourselves have sworn and pledged,
May you decompose, be burned and then proceed to hell.
May we Yogins who keep the commitments
Entirely accomplish our activities.
And may our retainers be protected as an only son.
May you Piśācīs also obtain accomplishments.
And actualise the rites as you have been charged.

—Such an injunction is to be given. [15]

The main part of the rite in which the wrathful deities are attained is this which follows. [16]

By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations,
Of the Great Blood-Drinkers and so forth.
Whatever is desired—all and all.
All and all are accomplished. [17]

By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the Great Repository Goddess and so forth.
If one desires to subjugate
Subjugation is accomplished.
And if one desires to increase
Increase is accomplished.
By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the Great Incense Goddess and so forth.
If one desires lustre.
Lustre is accomplished,
And if one desires languor
Languor is accomplished. [18]

By the great songs and verses,
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the great Siṃhamukhī and so forth,
All beings in their entirety are consumed.
And are made non-existent.
Even to the extent of the smallest atomic particle.
By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the great Gr̥dhramukhī and so forth,
(Organs) are all extracted, without exception.
And are all thoroughly depleted. [19]

By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the host of retainers, concubines and female servants.
Curses and imprecations should be made.

All rites are accomplished in their entirety. [20]

Near trees, groves of thickets,
A single tree trunk, and a place touched by fire.
And with clarity, Joy, attachment and wrath
The "consonantal" rites should be well performed. [21]

At these words, the Tathāgatas were purified in the presence of the Tathāgata himself. [22]

This completes the twentieth chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled The Consecration of Spontaneous Enlightened Activity. [23]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.1]

Then the Tathāgata, Transcendent Lord and Great Joyous One, became absorbed in the contemplation called "the consecration of the spontaneous commitment", and uttered these meaningful expressions. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas de-bzhin gshegs-pa bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos lhun-gyis grub-pa'i dam-tshig byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs-nas ched-du brjod-pa 'di-brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (596.4-606.6):]

The fifth section (of the extensive exegesis of the means for attaining the maṇḍala of wrathful deities in accordance with the path—see p. 1147) concerns the attainment of enlightened activity by those who keep the commitments. It has three subdivisions, namely the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 20.1):]

Once the sequence of the commitments had been explained, then (de-nas) in order that those who keep the commitments might accomplish enlightened activity, [the Tathāgata, de-bzhin gshegs-pa], Transcendent Lord (bcom-ldan-'das) and Great Joyous One (dgyes-pa chen-pos) of pristine cognition became absorbed in the contemplation called (zhes-bya-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-la snyoms-par zhugs) the "consecration of the (byin-gyis rlob-pa) primordial, natural and spontaneous commitment" (lhun-gyis grub-pa'i dam-tshig) as enlightened activity, and uttered these meaningful

expressions (-nas ched-du brjod-pa 'di brjod-do) through which all is accomplished.

The second subdivision has three parts, namely a general teaching on the sequence of the four kinds of enlightened activity; a particular exegesis of the injunctions which follow these rites and the benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations; and the distinctions between the places and contemplations associated with the attainment of the four rites.

[Sequence of the Four Kinds of Enlightened Activity (597.1-602.4):]

The first has four aspects—the rite of wrath, the rite of subjugation, the rite of enrichment, and the rite of pacification.

[i. The rite of wrath has three sections, of which the first is the rite of the burning fire. (It comments on Ch. 20.2):]

[Read next page]

Text 20.2 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.2]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings
(In the shape of) the syllable E,
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of wrath
To the awesome, and most fierce blaze.
Even the body of a Buddha with its merits will be destroyed. [2]

[Tibetan]

E-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog /
'bar-ba gtum-chen rngam-pa-la /
khros-pa'i yid-kyis mchod-sbyin-bya /
sangs-rgyas bsod-nams sku-yang 'jig / [2]

Commentary:

[i. The rite of wrath has three sections, of which the first is the rite of the burning fire. (It comments on Ch. 20.2):]

In the midst of feast-offerings (tshogs-kyi) complete with the characteristics of the rite of wrath—with a triangular hearth in the shape of the syllable E (E-yi),[1] the being of commitment corresponding to the supreme maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor mchog) of the different deities is creatively visualised, and the being of pristine cognition enters therein. With an attitude of wrath (khros-pa'i yid-kyis) directed towards the one who is the object of the rite (i.e. the victim),[2] the Mantrin should make offerings

(mchod sbyin-bya) of wrath and present burnt sacraments to (la) that non-dual nature, which assumes the awesome and most fierce (gtum-chen ngam-pa) form of Agni—a blaze ('bar-ba) or mass of raging fire. Thereupon, even the body (sku-yang) of a Buddha (sangs-rgyas) attained through the two provisions, and adorned with the signs of its hundred merits (bsod-nams) will be destroyed ('jig). What need one say about ordinary mundane beings! Alternatively, one might interpret this verse to mean that the present person who is the object of the rite is destroyed because all sentient beings are explained to be Buddhas.

[The second section is the rite of the stabbing kila (which comments on Ch. 20.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The triangular hearth in the shape of the Sanskrit letter E is described above. Ch. 9. pp. 784-786.

[2]:

Tibetan bsgrub-bya. The compassionate motivation behind this wrath is emphasised elsewhere, e.g.. Ch. 11. pp. 914-922.

Text 20.3 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.3]

A symbolic representation (of the victim),
With the five nectars or five edibles.
Should be prepared with the name attached.
Once (the victim) has been summoned.
Stab the effigy with the kila of indestructible reality—
Reduced to atomic particles,
It should be offered to the assembled host. [3]

[Tibetan]

bdud-rtsi lnga-'am zas-lnga-la /
mtshan-ma ming-du bcas-par-bya /
bkug-nas rdo-rje phur-pas gdab /
rdul-du byas-nas tshogs-la dbul / [3]

Commentary:

[The second section is the rite of the stabbing kila (which comments on Ch. 20.3):]

A symbolic representation (mtshan-ma) or effigy of the victim should be (-nar-bya) prepared (bcas) from materials which include soil from the footprints fresh with the scent of the victim mixed with the five nectars or (bdud-rtsi lnga 'am) the five edibles (zas-lnga-la), i.e., the flesh of fish, molasses, dark sesame, honey and rice. That form should bear the Inscriptions of the victim's name (ming-du) attached to its forehead, of the clanname attached to its heart, and with the appropriate lifesupporting talisman and the syllables MĀRAYA PHAṬ attached to its genitals.[1] One should draw on bark, cotton or paper a surrounding series of syllables JAḤ, which effect the summons, and insert that inside (the effigy) or else attach it back and front, whichever is appropriate.[2] Once the actual victim has been summoned (bkug-nas) by means of mantras, contemplations and seals, one should visually created one's kila, made of iron and so forth, as Vajrakīla, the kila of indestructible reality (rdo-rje phur), and stab the effigy (gdab) with (-pas) it in the heart and so on.[3] Visualising that the body and speech (of the victim) are reduced to atomic particles (rdul-du byas-nas), it should be offered (dbul) as a burnt offering to the assembled host (tshogs-la) of Karma Heruka or to the assembled host of the deity of the 6 wrathful rite who was previously visualised in the hearth.

[The third is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression (which comments on Ch. 20.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The syllables MĀRAYA PHAṬ express the wrathful rite. See above, p. 786. On the significance of the "life-supporting talisman" (bla-btags / bla-gnas), which is a magical means of personal protection often in the form of a fierce animal, see the life of gNyags Jñānakumāra in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5. pp. 281-289. and note; also Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, pp. 173-174. 481-483.

[2]:

"The syllables which effect the summons" (gugs-byed-kyi yi-ge).

[3]:

The wrathful rite is effected by Vajrakīla in the form of an iron material kila. Cf.. p. 1262, the rite of subjugation effected by Padmakīla in the form of a copper material kila: p. 1263-1264, the rite of enrichment effected by Ratnakīla in the form of a sold material kila: and p. 1265. the rite of pacification effected by Buddhakīla in the form of a silver material kila.

Text 20.4 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.4]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable E
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
Then, sealed, (their bodies) shake and move
Throughout the ten directions.
Whereupon (the victim) becomes insane.
Bursts asunder, and is Incinerated. [4]

[Tibetan]

E-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-du /
lu-gu rgyud-du sbrel-bsdams-nas /
bcings-'gyur bskyod-na phyogs-bcur gYo /
myos-nas gas-te 'tshig-par 'gyur / [4]

Commentary:

[The third is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression (which comments on Ch. 20.4):]

At the circumference of the hearth or the maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor-du) of feast-offerings (tshogs-kyi) associated with the wrathful rite, which is in the (triangular) shape of the syllable E (E-yi), the Yogins are bound together in a chain (lu-gu-rgyud-du sbrel-bsdams) by their little fingers, with their thumbs pressing down on the middle and ring fingers and the Index fingers outstretched.

Then (nas), once this seal has been sealed (bcings-gyur), their bodies shake (bskyod-nas) and, with dancesteps of indestructible reality, they move (gYo) their bodies and hand-seals throughout the ten directions (phyogs-bcur gYo), saying:

HŪṀ HŪṀ HŪṀ!

By indestructible hatred and its concomitants

All the myriad world-systems

Are Instantly destroyed.

There is nothing at all that is not destroyed.

MĀRAYA PHAṬ!

Thus it is visualised that the feet dance upon the effigy, whereupon the victim is reduced to atomic particles. The victim to whom this refers becomes insane (myos-nas), his heart bursts asunder (gas-te) and his body is incinerated (tshig-par-'gyur) and becomes insubstantial.

There are some who say that once the previous rite of the burnt-offering has been concluded, the site (of the maṇḍala) is erased clean, and upon it the male and female Yogins form a triangle. They visualise the form of Karma Heruka in the midst of the flames, and joining all their ring fingers, they place the effigy in the middle and dance around it. Now,

although rites are Indeed accomplished by any of these three Individual steps—burnt offering, oppression and dance, the supreme accomplishment occurs when all three are complete.[1]

[ii. The rite of subjugation also has three sections. Among them the first is the rite of the burning fire (which comments on Ch. 20.5):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's view is that all three steps occur in conjunction. Lo-chen, op. cit.. p. 429, considers these rites to have five steps—the preparation of the effigy, the visualisation of the maṇḍala deities, the actual rites which are to be attained, the offerings to be made and their attributes, and the rite of dancing in a chain with its attributes.

Text 20.5 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.5]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings

In the shape of the syllable VAM,

(The Mantrin) should make offerings

With an attitude of attachment

To the resplendent and enormous blaze.

Even indestructible speech will be subjugated. [5]

[Tibetan]

vaṃ-gi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog /

'bar-ba gzi-brjid lhun-chen-la /

chags-pa'i yid-kyis mchod-sbyin-bya /

rdo-rje gsung-yang dbang-du 'gyur / [5]

Commentary:

[ii. The rite of subjugation also has three sections. Among them the first is the rite of the burning fire (which comments on Ch. 20.5):]

In this case the hearth is symbolised by the shape of the syllable VAM (vaṃ-gyi) and drawn as a semi-circle. The supreme maṇḍala of the feast-offerings (tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog) conveys and entirely corresponds to the characteristic nature of the hearth and the central and peripheral deities.[1] In the fire of the hearth and Agni, the fire-god, are present in the subjugating form of an Intense blaze ('bar-ba), resplendent (gzi-brjid) and enormous (lhun-chen) in stature. The Mantrin should make offerings (mchod-sbyin-bya) to (la) it with an attitude of attachment (chags-pa'i yid-

kyis) for the victim, offering to the fire those sacraments corresponding to the rite of subjugation.[2] Thereby, even (yang) Amitābha, the one of indestructible speech (rdo-rje gsung) will be subjugated (dbang-du-'gyur).

[The second is the rite of the stabbing kila (which comments on Ch. 20.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the rite of subjugation and its hearth, shaped as a semi-circle in the manner of the Sanskrit syllable VAM, see also above, p. 784.

[2]:

The sacraments of this rite are enumerated above, pp. 784-785. Cf. Lochon, op. cit.. p. 4311.

Text 20.6 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.6]

A symbolic representation (of the victim)

With the five nectars or five edibles

Should be prepared with name attached.

Stab the effigy with the kila of indestructible desire

And offer it to the assembled host of desire

Until it has vanished. [6]

[Tibetan]

bdud-rtsi lnga-'am zas-lnga-la /
mtshan-ma ming-du bcas-par-byas /
rdo-rje chags-pa'i phur-pas gdab /
chags-pa'i tshogs-la thim-par dbul / [6]

Commentary:

[The second is the rite of the stabbing kila (which comments on Ch. 20.6):]

An image or symbolic representation (mtshan-ma) of the victim who is to be subjugated, is made with the five nectars or five edibles (bdud-rtsi lnga 'am zas-lnga) and an article of clothing which bears the scent of the victim. Inside it one should insert paper-inscriptions and so forth, which should be prepared (bcas-par-bya) and drawn with the victim's name (ming-du), clan and talisman attached, and then inserted. Visualising one's

kila (phur), made of copper and so forth, as Padmakīla, the one of indestructible desire (rdo-rje chags-pa), stab the effigy (gdab) with (-pas) it; and then offer (dbul) that effigy which has been stabbed to (la) Padma Heruka and his retinue, the assembled host of desire (chags-pa'i tshogs-la), or to the deities who were previously in the hearth, until it has vanished (thim-par) without duality.

[The third is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression (which comments on Ch. 20.7):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.7]

In the maṇḍala of the feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable VAM,
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain,
Then, summoned, even Vajra-(padma) becomes an attendant.
Whatever one desires will similarly come to pass. [7]

[Tibetan]

vaṃ-gi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-du /
lu-gu rgyud-du sbrel-bsdams-nas /
'gug-'gyur rdo-rje'ang phyi-bzhin 'brang /
ci-'dod de-bzhin 'ong-bar 'gyur / [7]

Commentary:

[The third is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression (which comments on Ch. 20.7):]

At the extremities of the hearth or the maṇḍala of feast-offerings in shape of the syllable VAM (vaṃ-gi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor), i.e., in (du) the maṇḍala of subjugation, the Yogins are bound together in a chain (lu-gu rgyud-du sbrel-bsdams); and then (nas), after performing a dance, all living beings are summoned ('gugs-'gyur). Even ('ang) Vajrapadma (rdo-rje), or beautiful Mahendra becomes an attendant (phyi-bzhin 'brang).[1] What else need one say about ordinary human beings' Whatever one desires (ci-'dod) in one's mind will similarly come to pass (de-bzhin 'ong-bar 'gyur).

[iii. The rite of enrichment also has these three parts. Firstly, (the rite of the burning fire comments on Ch. 20.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Vajrapadma and Mahendra are aspects of Hayagrīva. Cf. Lochen, op. cit., p. 426, who reads Vajrapāṇi for these two.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.8]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable MA
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of joy To the blaze that is absorbed
And emanated with great brilliance.
Enlightened attributes will equal the limits of space. [8]

[Tibetan]

ma-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog /
'bar-ba 'du-'phro gzi-chen-la /
dga'-ba'i yid-kyis mchod-sbyin-bya /
yon-tan nam-mkha'i mtha'-dang mnyam / [8]

Commentary:

[iii. The rite of enrichment also has these three parts. Firstly, (the rite of the burning fire comments on Ch. 20.8):]

In the supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings, in the square hearth shape of the syllable MA (ma-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog),[1] the fire and Agni, the fire-god, are both inwardly absorbed ('du) as a mass of light-rays which blaze ('bar-ba) forth, so that raptures are gathered; and they are outwardly emanated ('phro) so that hopes are fulfilled with great brilliance (gzi-chen). The Mantrin should make offerings (mchod sbyin-bya) of enrichment to (la) it, with an attitude (yid-kyis) of joy (dga'-ba'i) and gladness. Thereupon, one will obtain enlightened attributes (yon-tan) such as an increase in lifespan, glory and riches, equal (-dang mnyam) to the limits of space (nam-mkha'i mtha').

[The second (is the stabbing of the kila which comments on Ch. 20.9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the rite of enrichment, its hearth, shaped as a square in the manner of the Sanskrit syllable MA, and its offerings, see also above, p. 784.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.9]

A symbolic representation with name attached,
With the five nectars or five edibles
Should be prepared and conceived
As a wish-fulfilling treasure of attributes.
Stab this effigy with the kila of joyous pride,
And indestructible brilliance will multiply. [9]

[Tibetan]

bdud-rtsi lnga-'am zas-lnga-la /
[mtshan-ma'i ming-du bcas-par bya /]
yon-tan yid-bzhin gter-du brtag /
nga-rgyal dga-'phro'i phur-pas gdab /
rdo-rje gzi-brjid 'phel-bar 'gyur / [9]

Commentary:

[The second (is the stabbing of the kila which comments on Ch. 20.9):]

A symbolic representation should be prepared with name attached (mtshan-ma'i ming-du bcas-par bya) of those objects which one desires to increase and multiply—gems, gold, silver, pearls, horses, oxen and so forth, and mixed with grains of rice, precious stones and other things and with five nectars or five edibles (bdud-rtsi lnga'am zas-lnga-la) which are appropriate. This is meditated on and is to be conceived (brtag) as a treasure (gter-du) of wish-fulfilling (yid-bzhin) precious gems in which emerge the desired enlightened attributes (yon-tan) that are required. Visualise one's kila, made of gold and so forth, as Ratnakīla, the one of joyous pride (nga-rgyal dga-'phro'i) who is a downpour of accomplishments, and stab this effigy with the kila (phur-pas gdab). Then, in order that the great brilliance (gzi-brjid) of indestructible (rdo-rje) enlightened attributes will multiply ('phel-bar 'gyur), make offerings to the assembled host of Ratna Heruka, i.e., in the aforementioned hearth for the rite of enrichment.

[The third (is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression which comments on Ch. 20.10):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.10]

In the maṇḍala of the feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable MA
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
They shake, and emit great magical transformations
of blazing brilliance.
Space becomes filled with wish-fulfilling (gems). [10]

[Tibetan]

ma-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-du /
lu-gu-rgyud-du sgrel-bsdams bskyod /
gzl-brjid 'bar-ba'i 'phrul-chen spro /
yid-bzhin nam-mkha' gang-bar 'gyur / [10]

Commentary:

[The third (is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression which comments on Ch. 20.10):]

At the extremities of the maṇḍala or hearth where enrichment is brought forth in the maṇḍala of feast-offerings in shape of the syllable MA (ma-yi tshigs-kyi dkyil-'khor-du), the Yogins are bound together in a chain (lu-gu-rgyud-du sbrel-bsdams). They shake (bskyod) throughout the ten directions, and through the light-rays made by their dancing-steps, they emanate (spro) the contemplation in which a cascade of the glorious cloud-masses of rapture descends right where they are, along with great magical transformations of blazing brilliance (gzl-brjid 'bar-ba'i 'phrul-chen spro). This is visualised to dispel the poverty of sentient beings, whereupon space becomes filled with wishfulfilling (yid-bzhin nam-mkha' gang-bar-'gyur) gems in which all desired attributes emerge and all aspirations are fulfilled.

[iv. The rite of pacification also has three parts, among which the first (Is the rite of the burning fire, which comments on Ch. 20.11):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the rite of pacification. its hearth, round like the Sanskrit syllable YA, and its offerings, see above, pp. 783-784.

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In the supreme maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable YA
Which shines forth as luminous brilliance
(The Mantrin) should make offerings
With an attitude of clarity.
Even beings of most awesome ferocity will become lustrous. [11]

[Tibetan]

yā-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog /
gsal-ba'i gzi-brjid 'tsher-ba-la /
dang-ba'i yid-kyis mchod-sbyin-bya /
gtum-chen rngam-pa'ang lhan-ner 'gyur / [11]

Commentary:

[iv. The rite of pacification also has three parts, among which the first
(Is the rite of the burning fire, which comments on Ch. 20.11):]

The supreme maṇḍala of feast-offerings in shape of the syllable YĀ (yā-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor mchog) has a circular hearth.[1] inside which both the fire and Agni, the fire-god, are visually created in a form which shines forth as luminous brilliance (gsal-ba'i gzi-brjid 'tsher-ba). The Mantrin, with an attitude of clarity (dang-ba'i yid-kyis), should make offerings (mchod sbyin-bya) to (la) it, which pacify sickness, harmful forces, and fears. Thereupon, even beings of ('ang) most pernicious and most awesome ferocity (gtum-chen rngam-pa) such as Māra and Rudra will be thoroughly pacified and will become lustrous (lhan-ner 'gyur) in enlightened mind. What else need one say about ordinary mundane beings'

[The second part (is the stabbing of the kīla, which comments on Ch. 20.12):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the rite of pacification. its hearth, round like the Sanskrit syllable YA, and its offerings, see above, pp. 783-784.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.12]

(A symbolic representation) with the five nectars or five edibles
Is conceived as an essence of disturbing awesome ferocity.

Stab this effigy with the kīla of lustrous radiance.
Offer it to the assembled host of blazing lustre. [12]

[Tibetan]

bdud-rtsi lnga'am zas-lnga-la /
gtum-rngam 'khrug-pa'i ngo-bor brtag /
lhan-ner gsal-ba'i phur-pas gdab /
'bar-ba lhan-ne'i tshogs-la dbul / [12]

Commentary:

[The second part (is the stabbing of the kīla, which comments on Ch. 20.12):]

A symbolic representation or effigy is made as before, mixing the clothing, scent and other articles of the one whom one desires to pacify with the five nectars or five edibles (bdud-rtsi lnga'am zas-lnga-la). This is conceived as an essence of (ngo-bor brtag) hostile, obstructing spirits and so forth who are endowed with ferocity (gtum) in body, awesome (rngam) speech, and disturbing ('khrug-pa'i) mind. Visualising one's kīla, made of silver and so forth, as Buddhakīla, the one of lustrous radiance (lhan-ner gsal-ba'i), stab this effigy with the kīla (phur-pas gdab). Offer it to (-la dbul) Buddhakīla and his retinue, the assembled host of blazing lustre ('bar-ba lhan-ne'i), or to the fire-god in accordance with the rite of pacification.

[The third (is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression, which comments on Ch. 20.13):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.13]

In the maṇḍala of feast offerings
In the shape of the syllable YA,
(The Yogins) are bound together in a chain.
They fill that blazing (fire)
With the blessing of their lustre.
All things are rendered undisturbed. [13]

[Tibetan]

yā-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-du /
lu-gu-rgyud-du sprel-nas bsdams /
'bar-ba lhan-ne'i byin-gyis khyab /
thams-cad gYo-ba med-par byed / [13]

Commentary:

[The third (is the rite of the dance-steps of oppression, which comments on Ch. 20.13):]

In the maṇḍala of feast offerings in shape of the syllable YĀ (yā-yi tshogs-kyi dkyil-khor-du), at the extremities of the maṇḍala or hearth of the peaceful rite, the Yogins dance, bound together in a chain (lu-gu-rgyud-du sbrel-nas bsdams). Thereupon, by pacification they fill (khyab) even that blazing ('bar-ba) fire of inimical wrath with the blessing of their lustre (lhan-ne'i byin-gyis). All things (thams-cad) including negative and malicious attitudes do not even minutely agitate the mind, so that they are rendered undisturbed (gYo-ba med-par byed).

Thus the shapes of the hearths are symbolised by the shapes of the four syllables E-VAM MA-YĀ.[1]

According to the bla-ma Rong-zom-pa, those who apply the rites of pacification and subjugation perceive dissimilarly shaped syllables, representing differently shaped objects, because they absorb and secure the repetitive sound of the syllable BAM.[2]

[The Injunctions which Follow these Rites and the Benefits of the Dance-steps and Gesticulations (602.4-606.1):]

The second subdivision (see p. 1257) is an explanation of the injunctions which follow those rites and the benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations. This has two sections, namely, the injunctions given to those who are under oath, and a teaching on the benefits of dance-steps and gesticulations.

[The former has two aspects, of which the first describes how Injunctions are given concerning the rites. (It comments on Ch. 20.14):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the symbolism of these syllables, see above. Ch. 1, pp. 336-349.

[2]:

This is merely a tentative explanation of Rong-zom-pa's view, according to which our text should read bsnan-pa'i sgra for ban-na'i sgra. Another suggested reading is ban-ni'i sera. meaning that the shapes of the syllables VAM and YA are Imitations or derivatives of the syllable BAM.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.14]

One should make offerings to the retainers,
The hosts of their concubines, and female servants,
Who desire to be given the residual offering.
One should proclaim well their commitments,
And then command them to perform
The rites which they desire: [14]

[Tibetan]

slas-dang byi-mo bran-mo'i tshogs /
lhag-ma'i mchod-sbyin 'dod-pa sbyin /
rang-gi dam-tshig rab-bsgrags-nas /
gang-'dod las-de byed-par bsgo / [14]

Commentary:

[The Injunctions which Follow these Rites and the Benefits of the Dance-steps and Gesticulations (602.4-606.1):]

The second subdivision (see p. 1257) is an explanation of the injunctions which follow those rites and the benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations. This has two sections, namely, the injunctions given to those who are under oath, and a teaching on the benefits of dance-steps and gesticulations.

[The former has two aspects, of which the first describes how Injunctions are given concerning the rites. (It comments on Ch. 20.14):]

Immediately after any of these four rites of enlightened activity has been performed, one should partake of the communal feastofferings. The residue (lhag-ma) of food and drink is then gathered and consecrated by the exhaled breath (kha-phru) of the master of indestructible reality.[1] One should make offerings (sbyin) (of this residue) to the retainers (slas) who gather in the maṇḍala of the Great Glorious One, and (dang) to the wives of the Mahādeva class and to the hosts of their (-i tshogs) girlfriends or concubines (byi-mo) and female servants (bran-mo), because they are guests who desire to be given the residual offering (lhag-ma'i mchod-sbyin 'dod-ca). Carrying it to an eating-place at a distance of seventy paces,[2] one should proclaim well (rab-bsgrags) their (rang-gi) respective commitments (dam-tshig), i.e. those which they previously took in the presence of the Great Glorious One (Śriheruka), and then (nas) command them to perform the rites (las-de bye-par bsgo) such as pacification, which they desire (gang-'dod).

[The second aspect concerns the actual Injunctions which are given. (It comments on Ch. 20.15):]

[Read next page]

[1]:

The "residual offering" (lhag-ma) is gathered during the feast-offering ceremony from each participant and, once consecrated, is offered to those lesser deities of ritual activity, who abide outside the locus of the gaṇacakra, either because they are immobile or because their arrival there would cause obstacles.

[2]:

Tibetan za-lam bdun-cu'i sar bskyal.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.15]

Swiftly actualise without impediment
The oaths which you pledged and upheld
When in the past the Great Glorious Heruka,
Most malignant, fierce and fearful.
Had most amazing power and blessing
Which disciplined you all, without exception.
He overpowered Mahādeva and so forth.
Making you, their retainers, into his Īśvarīs and retainers,
And he assigned you your different rites.
If you do not act as you have pledged.
Like those who have sworn and then transgressed
Their oaths of allegiance.
If you transgress this commitment
May the Wrathful Yakṣa sever your very heads.
Bodies and hearts into seven pieces.
Rather, may you perform the tasks
With which you are charged
By this Yogin who holds the mantras.
If you do not actualise these activities,
Which you yourselves have sworn and pledged,
May you decompose, be burned and then proceed to hell.
May we Yogins who keep the commitments
Entirely accomplish our activities.
And may our retainers be protected as an only son.
May you Piśācīs also obtain accomplishments.
And actualise the rites as you have been charged.
—Such an injunction is to be given. [15]

[Tibetan]

sngon-tshe dpal-chen he-ru-ka /

shin-tu gdug-cing gtum-bag-can /
thams-cad ma-lus 'dul-mdzad-pa'i /
dbang-dang byin-brlabs rmad-po-che /
lha-chen la-sogs dbang-bsdus-nas /
'khor-rnams dbang-phyug slas-su byas /

so-so'i las-rnams bskos-pa-de /
 ji-ltar dam-bcas khas-blangs-pa'i /
 ma-thogs myur-du mngon-par phyung /
 dam-bcas bzhin-du ma-byas-na /
 ji-ltar dam-bcas mna'-bor-ba'i /
 sdom-bcas de-las 'da'-bar 'gyur /
 dam-tshig de-las 'das'-gyur-na /
 mgo-lus-snying yang tshal-pa bdun /
 ya-kṣa khro-bos gtubs-par 'gyur /
 de-bas rnal-'byor sngags-'chang-gis /
 ji-ltar bcol-ba bzhin-du byos /
 las-de mngon-du ma-byas-na /
 rang-gi mna'-bor khas-blangs-pa'i /
 rul-myags 'tshig-nas dmyal-bar 'gro /
 rnal-'byor dam-la gnas gyur-pa'i /
 las-rnams yongs-su bya-ba-dang /
 'khor-rnams bu-gcig bzhin-du skyongs /
 phra-men-ma-yang dngos-grub thob /
 bcol-ba'i las-rnams mngon-du byos /
 —zhes bsgo'o / [15]

Commentary:

[The second aspect concerns the actual Injunctions which are given. (It comments on Ch. 20.15):]

Swiftly actualise (myur-du mngon-par-phyung), instantly and without impediment (ma-thogs), the results of your rites, in accordance with the oaths which you pledged and upheld (ji-ltar dam-bcas khas-blangs-pa'i) previously when (tshe) in the past (sngon) the Great Glorious Heruka (dpal-chen he-ru-ka) grew most malignant, fierce, and fearful (shin-tu gdug-cing gtum bag-can) to tame the proud Īśvarī spirits. He had most amazing power and blessing which disciplined ('dul-mdzad-pa'i dbang-dang byin-rlabs rmad-po-che) you proud spirits of all (thams-cad) world-systems without exception (ma-lus). He overpowered (dbang-bsdus-nas) all spirits, Mahādeva and so forth (lha-chen la-sogs), making (byas) and consecrating you, their retainers ('khor-rnams), wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters without exception Into his Īśvaris and retainers (dbang-phyug slas-su) for the sake of enjoyment. And then the Great Glorious One assigned you (bkos-pa-de) respectively your different rites (so-so'i las-rnams) such as attraction, imprisoning [imprisoning?], and slaying. If you do not act as you have respectively pledged (dam-bcas bzhin-du ma-byas-na), like those who (ji-ltar) in the past have sworn and then transgressed their commitments and oaths of allegiance (dam-bcas mna' bor-ba'i sdom-bcas de-las 'da'-bar-'gyur), if you transgress this commitment (dam-tshig de-las 'das'-gyur-na) may ('gyur) the Wrathful (khro-bos) Yakṣa (ya-kṣa), [1] blazing forth fire, sever (gtub-par) your very heads, bodies and hearts into seven pieces (mgo-lus-snying yang tshal-pa bdun). Rather (de-bas) therefore, may you perform the tasks with which you are charged (ji-ltar bcol-bzhin-du byos) by (-gis) this Yogin, myself, who holds the mantras (rnal-'byor sngags-'chang). If you do not actualise these activities (las-de mngon-du ma-byas-na), in accordance with the oath which you yourselves

have sworn and pledged (rang-gi mna'-bor khas-blangs-pa'i), may you decompose, be burned and then proceed to hell (rul-myags 'tshig-nas dmyal-bar 'gro). May we Yogins who keep the supreme commitments (rnal-'byor dam-la gnas-gyur-pa'i) entirely accomplish (yongs-su bya-ba) our desired activities (las-rnams) and (dane) may the retinues ('khor-rnams) of us Yogins be protected (skyongs) as an only son (bu-gcig bzhin-du). By the power of this, may you Piśācis also (phra-men-ma yang) obtain (thob) supreme and common accomplishments (dngos-grub), and actualise the rites as you have been charged (bcol-ba'i las-rnams mngon-du byos) by us Yogins.

—Such an injunction is to be given (—zhes bsgo'o).

[The second part concerns the benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations. It comprises both the recognition of their significance and a detailed exegesis.]

[The former (comments on Ch. 20.16):][2]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The Wrathful Yakṣa (yakṣa khro-bo) is a form of Gu-ru Drag-po, here performing the function of a "messenger or intermediary of the rite" (las-kyi pho-nya). On this term, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. pp. 303-304.

[2]:

The sections 16-20 are known as appendices of enlightened activity in twenty-four pādas. See above, p. 662.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.16]

The main part of the rite in which the wrathful deities are attained is this which follows. [16]

[Tibetan]

khro-bo bsgrub-pa'i las-kyi gtso-bo-ni yin-no / [16]

Commentary:

[The former (comments on Ch. 20.16):][1]

The main part of the rite (las-kyi gtso-bo-ni) or activity in which (-pa'i) the maṇḍalas of the wrathful deities (khro-bo) are attained (bsgrub) is this ('di-yin-no) rite of the dance-steps and gesticulations which follows.

[The latter has four sections:]

[i. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the five central deities (comment on Ch. 20.17):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The sections 16-20 are known as appendices of enlightened activity in twenty-four pādas. See above, p. 662.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.17]

By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations,
Of the Great Blood-Drinkers and so forth.
Whatever is desired—all and all.
All and all are accomplished. [17]

[Tibetan]

khrag-'thung chen-po la-sogs-pa'i /
bro-gar glu-tshig chen-po-ni /
thams-cad thams-cad ci-'dod-par /
thams-cad thams-cad byed-pa yin / [17]

Commentary:

[i. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the five central deities (comment on Ch. 20.17):]

By the great (chen-pos-ni) tumult of songs and verses (glu-tshig), revealed during the four rites and the dance-steps and gesticulations of (-pa'i bro-gar) the Great Blood Drinkers (khrag-'thung chen-po). Buddha Heruka and so forth (la-sogs), along with their queens, whatever is desired (ci 'dod-par), all (thams-cad) the common accomplishments including those of pacification and enrichment and all (thams-cad) the supreme accomplishments—i.e., all (thams-cad) enlightened activities and all (thams-cad) accomplishments are accomplished (byed-pa-yin).

[ii. The benefits achieved by (the dance-steps and gesticulations) of the

eight Mātarīs of the sensory locations (comment on Ch. 20.18):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.18]

By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the Great Repository Goddess and so forth.
If one desires to subjugate
Subjugation is accomplished.
And if one desires to increase
Increase is accomplished.
By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the Great Incense Goddess and so forth.
If one desires lustre.
Lustre is accomplished,
And if one desires languor
Languor is accomplished. [18]

[Tibetan]

mdzod-ldan chen-mo la-sogs-pa'i /
bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni /
'du-bar 'dod-na 'du-bar byed /
'phel-bar 'dod-na 'phel-bar byed /
spos-mo chen-mo la-sogs-pa'i /
bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni /
lhan-ner 'dod-na lhan-ner byed /
rmugs-par 'dod-na rmugs-par byed / [18]

Commentary:

[ii. The benefits achieved by (the dance-steps and gesticulations) of the eight Mātarīs of the sensory locations (comment on Ch. 20.18):]

By the great songs and verses, dance-steps and gesticulations (bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni) of the four goddesses who are radiant in the cardinal directions—i.e., the Great (chen) White One or Repository (mdzod-ldan) Goddess (-mo), whose name derives from (the Sanskrit) Gaurī, and so forth (la-sogs-pa'i), if one desires to subjugate ('du-bar 'dod-na) living creatures, the subjugation ('du) is accomplished (bar-byed), and if one desires to Increase ('phel-bar 'dod-na) the lifespan, material resources and so forth, this increase is accomplished ('phel-bar byed).

By the great songs, verses, dance-steps and gesticulations (bro-gar glu-

tshig chen-mos-ni) of (-'i) the goddesses in the four Intermediate directions —the Great Incense Goddess (spos-mo chen-mo), i.e., Pukkāṣī and so forth (la-sogs-pa), if one desires ('dod-na) to pacify and establish in lustre (lhan-ner) those spirits who are hostile, obstructive and so forth, pacification or lustre is accomplished (lhan-ner byed); and if one desires ('dod-na) to establish languor (rmugs-par) and unclarity in their minds, languor is accomplished (rmugs-par byed).

[iii. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the eight Piśācis of the sense-objects (comment on Ch. 20.19):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.19]

By the great songs and verses,
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the great Siṃhamukhī and so forth,
All beings in their entirety are consumed.
And are made non-existent.
Even to the extent of the smallest atomic particle.
By the great songs and verses.
Dance-steps and gesticulations
Of the great Gr̥dhramukhī and so forth,
(Organs) are all extracted, without exception.
And are all thoroughly depleted. [19]

[Tibetan]

seng-gdong chen-mo la-sogs-pa'i /
bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni /
thams-cad kun-la za-bar byed /
rdul-cha tsam-yang med-par byed /
bzhad-gdong chen-mo la-sogs-pa'i /
bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni /
thams-cad [kun-las] ma-lus 'byin-par byed /
kun-la rab-tu nyams-par byed / [19]

Commentary:

[iii. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the eight Piśācis of the sense-objects (comment on Ch. 20.19):]

By the great songs, and verses, dance-steps and gesticulations (bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos ni) of (-'i) the Piśācis in the four cardinal directions—the great Siṃhamukhī and so forth (seng-ge gdong chen-mo la-sogs-pa),

the bodies and life-breath of all (thams-cad) malignant beings and all hostile and obstructing spirits in their entirety (kun-la) are consumed (za-bar-byed): and they are made non-existent even to the extent of the smallest atomic particle (rdul-cha tsam-yang med-par byed).

By the great songs, verses, dance-steps and gesticulations (bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni) of (-'i) the Piśācis in the four intervening directions—the great Grdhramukhī and so forth (bzhad-gdong chen-mo la-sogs-pa), the entrails and hearts are extracted ('byin-nar byed) from all (thams-cad) malignant beings without exception (ma-lus): and the excellent attributes of their lives and so forth are all thoroughly depleted (kun-la rab-nyams-par-byed).

[iv. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the twenty-eight Īśvarīs (comment on Ch. 20.20):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.20]

By the great songs and verses.

Dance-steps and gesticulations

Of the host of retainers, concubines and female servants.

Curses and imprecations should be made.

All rites are accomplished in their entirety. [20]

[Tibetan]

slas-dang byi-mo bran-mo'i tshogs /

bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni /

rbad-cing gtang-bar bya-ba-ste /

thams-cad thams-cad byed-pa yin / [20]

Commentary:

[iv. The benefits of the dance-steps and gesticulations of the twenty-eight Īśvarīs (comment on Ch. 20.20):]

By the great songs, verses, dance-steps and gesticulations of [the host of] retainers, concubines, and female servants (slas-dang byi-mo bran—mo'i [tshogs] bro-gar glu-tshig chen-mos-ni), curses (rbad) delivered to enemies by means of a messenger and (-cing) imprecations (gtang-bar) ritually delivered by an envoy should be made (bya-ba-ste).[1] Thus, all (thams-cad) rites which externally rectify contradictory acts and all rites which internally achieve the desired accomplishments are accomplished (byed-pa-yin) in their entirety (thams-cad).

[Distinctions between the Places and Contemplations associated with

the Attainment of the Four Rites (606.1-606.4):]

[The third part (see p. 1257) concerns the distinctions between the places and contemplations associated with the attainment of the four rites. (It comments on Ch. 20.21):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan pho-nya dgra-la rbad-cing mngag-gzhug las-la gtang. Cf. the life of gNyags Jñānakumāra in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 5, pp. 281-289.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.21]

Near trees, groves of thickets,

A single tree trunk, and a place touched by fire.

And with clarity, Joy, attachment and wrath

The "consonantal" rites should be well performed. [21]

[Tibetan]

ljon-pa dang-ni lcug-phran tshal /
sdong-gcig-dang-ni mes-reg-drung /
dang-pas dga'-bas chags-pa-dang /
khros-pas kā-li rab-tu bya / [21]

Commentary:

[Distinctions between the Places and Contemplations associated with the Attainment of the Four Rites (606.1-606.4):]

[The third part (see p. 1257) concerns the distinctions between the places and contemplations associated with the attainment of the four rites. (It comments on Ch. 20.21):]

In places which are respectively near (drung) forests of trees (ljon-pa-dang-ni), groves of thickets (lcug-phran-tshal) surrounded by trees, a single tree trunk (sdong gcig) and (dang-ni) a place touched by fire (mes-reg), i.e. a forest which has been burned by fire, in order to attain the rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath, one should be endowed with (-pas) the respective attitudes of clarity, joy, attachment and wrath (dang-pas dga'-bas chags-pas-dang khros), in this way, the "consonantal" rites (kā-li), i.e., the four rites of ("liberating") skillful means, should be well performed (rab-tu bya).

There are some who explain this section also refers to union with four female consorts saying that the term "vocalic rites" (ā-li) is implied, but there is no occasion for such an explanation.[1]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 20.22):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On the sexual practices, which are clearly distinguished from the present rites, see above, Ch. 11, pp. 899-914, Ch. 13. 1006-1022.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.22]

At these words, the Tathāgatas were purified in the presence of the Tathāgata himself. [22]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid
sbyong-par gyur-to / [22]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 20.22):]

At these words (-zhes brjod-pas), in the presence of (la) the central deity or the Tathāgata himself (de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid), the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-na-nyid) of the retinue were purified (sbyong-par gyur-to) in the realisation of the four kinds of enlightened activity, through receiving his authorisation.

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 20.23):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 20.23]

This completes the twentieth chapter from the Secret Nucleus

Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled The Consecration of Spontaneous Enlightened Activity. [23]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las lhun-gyis grub-pa'i 'phrin-las byin-gyis rlob-pa zhes-bya-ba'i le'u-ste nyi-shu-pa'o / [23]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 20.23):]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the twentieth chapter (le'u ste nyi-shu-pa) from the (las) natural Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) pristine cognition, entitled (zhes-bya-ba'i) The Consecration of (byin-gyis rlob-pa) the great deeds of the buddhas as the four kinds of primordial Spontaneous Enlightened Activity (lhun-gyis grub-pa'i 'phrin-las) for the sake of those to be trained.

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Then the maṇḍala of the assembled host of the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, sang this following song with a most awesome glare.
[1]

HŪṂ! Most ferocious, blazing forth
Like the fire at the end of time,
There are light rays which have the radiance
Of a hundred thousand suns,
Frowns of wrath like the flashing
Of a thousand lightning bolts,
And sharp fangs which devour. HOḤ! [2]

HŪṂ! With an awesome roar, most ferocious
Like the rumbling of a thousand claps of thunder,
And the sound of a hundred-thousand Mount Sumerus crumbling,
There is the loudest laughter of Ala and Hala,
And the whirlwind that is emitted has a greater blast. [3]

HŪṂ! The great light of wrathful discriminative awareness
Is radiant in all maṇḍalas of pristine cognition.
It entirely subdues (conflicting emotions)
In blazing pristine cognition.
The pristine cognitions of diverse kinds
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ! [4]

HŪṂ! The king of wrathful deities is a great cloud.
Causing a treat cascade of wrathful maṇḍalas.
The diverse wrathful treasures
Of the wish-fulfilling maṇḍalas that emerge
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ! [5]

HŪṂ! The great demons of all demons
Are those demons among demons who subdue demons
And also terrify their fearsome hosts.
These most terrifying (Herukas)
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ! [6]

HŪṂ! The great rock of indestructible reality is the solidifier.
The water of indestructible reality is the great dissolver.
The fire of indestructible reality is a mighty blaze.
The air of indestructible reality is a great whirlwind. HOḤ! [7]

Such was the song they purposefully sang. This completes the twenty-first chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled A Eulogy to the Wrathful Deities. [8]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.1]

Then the maṇḍala of the assembled host of the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, sane this following song with a most awesome glare.
[1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-po'i tshogs-kyi dkyil-'khor-gyis
shin-tu rngam-pa'i mdangs-kyis glu-'di blangs-so / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (606.6-610.6):]

The third part (of the exegesis of the maṇḍala in which the wrathful deities emerge—see p. 1075) is a ascription of the eulogy to the resultant Buddha-body and pristine cognition. It comprises a brief teaching on the how the eulogy arose and a detailed exegesis of its actual words.

[The former (comments on Ch. 21.1):]

Once the deeds of the maṇḍala of wrathful deities had been perfected, then (de-nas) this great apparition or the maṇḍala of (dkyil-'khor-gyis) of the five enlightened families of Blood Drinkers and their retinues, which is the assembled host of the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-ne chen-po'i tshogs), in order to praise the self-manifesting buddha-body and pristine cognition, sang this following song (glu-'di blangs-so) of joy with a most awesome glare (shin-tu rngam-pa'i mdangs-kyis).

The latter includes both a eulogy to the enlightened families and the lord of the enlightened families, and a eulogy to the maṇḍalas of supporting (buddha-body) and supported (pristine cognition).

[Eulogy to the Enlightened Families and their Lord:]

This has two parts, namely, a general eulogy to the five enlightened families and a particular eulogy to the mighty lord of the maṇḍala.

[i. This has five aspects, beginning with a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas in the enlightened family of Buddha-body. (It comments on Ch. 21.2):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.2]

HŪṂ! Most ferocious, blazing forth
Like the fire at the end of time,
There are light rays which have the radiance
Of a hundred thousand suns,
Frowns of wrath like the flashing
Of a thousand lightning bolts,
And sharp fangs which devour. HOḤ! [2]

[Tibetan]

HŪṂ gtum-chen dus-mtha'i me-ltar 'bar /
'od-zer nyi-ma 'bum-gyi gzi /

khro-gnyer glog-stong 'gyu-ba-bzhin /
mche-ba zang-yag za-byed che HOḤ / [2]

Commentary:

[Eulogy to the Enlightened Families and their Lord:]

This has two parts, namely, a general eulogy to the five enlightened families and a particular eulogy to the mighty lord of the maṇḍala.

[i. This has five aspects, beginning with a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas in the enlightened family of Buddha-body. (It comments on Ch. 21.2):]

The syllables HŪṂ begin each of the songs to the wrathful deities, symbolising that they possess the five Buddha-bodies and five pristine cognitions. Now, the Buddha-body is most ferocious (gtum-chen) because it tames proud spirits such as Māra and Rudra; and it is blazing forth ('bar) like the fire at the end of time ([dus-mtha'] me-ltar), which destroys the aeon. From the buddha-body, present in the midst of that flaming mass, there are light-rays ('od-zer) of pristine cognition which simultaneously absorb and emanate throughout the ten directions the radiance of a hundred thousand suns (nyi-ma 'bum-gyi gzi). There are frowns of wrath (khro-gnyer) which threaten venomous beings, and which travel like the flashing of a thousand lightning bolts (glog-stong 'gyu-ba bzhin). This Buddha-body maintains a most (che) terrifying guise with four sharp (zang-yag)[1] white fangs (mche-ba) which uproot venomous beings and devour (za-byed) the pernicious ones. The syllable HOḤ! is a laugh of astonishment, which is also added to the subsequent songs.

[The second aspect, which is a eulogy to all maṇḍalas of the enlightened family of Buddha-speech (comments on Ch. 21.3):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See the explanation of this term in Lo-chen. op. cit., p. 445. where zangs-yag is said to be equivalent to Sanskrit tikṣṇa.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.3]

HŪṂ! With an awesome roar, most ferocious
Like the rumbling of a thousand claps of thunder,
And the sound of a hundred-thousand Mount Sumerus crumbling,
There is the loudest laughter of Ala and Hala,
And the whirlwind that is emitted has a greater blast. [3]

[Tibetan]

HŪṢṢ rṅam-pa'i nga-ro 'brug-stong ldir /
gtum-chen ri-rab 'bum-bsnyil skad /
a-a ha-la'i gad-rgyangs che /
dbyuns-pa'i 'thor-rlung gYeng-ba ch'o / [3]

Commentary:

[The second aspect, which is a eulogy to all maṇḍalas of the enlightened family of Buddha-speech (comments on Ch. 21.3):]

The Buddha-speech of the wrathful deities is endowed with an awesome roar (rṅam-pa'i nga-ro), most ferocious (gtum-chen) like the simultaneous rumbling (ldir) of a thousand claps of thunder ('brug-stong), and in its terror it is equivalent to the sound (skad) of a hundred-thousand Mount Sumerus (ri-rab 'bum) simultaneously crumbliness (bsnyil). There is the loudest laughter of (-'i gad-rgyangs che) Ala and Hala (a-la ha-la); and the great whirlwind that is emitted (dbyugs-pa'i 'thor-rlung) from the force of their breath has a blast (gYeng-ba) greater (che'o) than the wind at the end of time because it terrifies venomous beings.

[The third aspect is a eulogy to the maṇḍalas belonging to the enlightened family of Buddha-mind (which comments on Ch. 21.4):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these categories of jñāna, see above, Ch. 1, note 45; also see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2. pp. 60a-63a. Note that the latter presentation is somewhat different in that the kṛtyupasthānajñāna is said to be the preception of the nirmāṇakāya, and the ji-snyed-pa mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes is said to include that.

[2]:

I.e. dharmadhātujñāna is the perception of the dharmakāya. Cf. NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 2, pp. 60aff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.4]

HŪṢṢ! The great light of wrathful discriminative awareness
Is radiant in all maṇḍalas of pristine cognition.
It entirely subdues (conflicting emotions)

In blazing pristine cognition.
The pristine cognitions of diverse kinds
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ [4]

[Tibetan]

HŪṂ khro-bo shes-rab 'od-po-che /
ye-shes dkyil-'khor kun-tu gsal /
'bar-ba'i ye-shes kun-tu 'joms /
sna-tshogs ye-shes thig-le che HOḤ / [4]

Commentary:

[The third aspect is a eulogy to the maṇḍalas belonging to the enlightened family of Buddha-mind (which comments on Ch. 21.4):]

One who knows all objects of knowledge without exception possesses the great light ('od-no-che) rays of discriminative awareness (shes-rab) which are wrathful (khro-bo) to the host of ignorant beings. That light is radiant in all maṇḍalas of (dkyil-'khor kun-tu gsal) the fivefold pristine cognition (ye-shes), so that it entirely subdues (kun-tu-'joms) the energy of conflicting emotions with their individual characteristics, which provisionally appear, blazing ('bar-ba'i) forth as the five poisons, but abide essentially in pristine cognition (ye-shes-su).

Moreover, this pristine cognition, with reference to the emanational body, comprises both the pristine cognition which qualitatively knows (the view) and that which quantitatively knows (phenomena); and, with reference to the body of perfect rapture, it comprises the mirror-like pristine cognition and so forth.{GL_NOTE::} These pristine cognitions of diverse kinds are present (sna-tshogs ye-shes) of a single savour in the pristine cognition of genuine reality, this great seminal point (thig-le che) which is the non-dual essence.{GL_NOTE::}

[The fourth aspect is a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas of the enlightened family of attributes. (It comments on Ch. 21.5):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.5]

HŪṂ! The king of wrathful deities is a great cloud.
Causing a treat cascade of wrathful maṇḍalas.
The diverse wrathful treasures
Of the wish-fulfilling maṇḍalas that emerge
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ! [5]

[Tibetan]

HŪṂ khro-bo'i rgyal-po sprin chen-po /
khros-pa'i dkyil-'khor char-chen 'bebs /
dkyil-'khor yid-bzhin 'byung-ba'i gter /
sna-tshogs khros-pa'i thig-le che HOḤ / [5]

Commentary:

[The fourth aspect is a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas of the enlightened family of attributes. (It comments on Ch. 21.5):]

One who possesses the enlightened attributes which instruct venomous beings is the king of wrathful deities (khro-bo 'i rgyal-po). That one is said to be a great cloud (sprin chen-po) because he is the basis for the downpour of manifold emanations, causing a great cascade of wrathful maṇḍalas (khros-pa'i dkyil-'khor char-chen 'bebs) through the wrath of his Buddha-mind. Among the diverse wrathful (sna-tshogs khros-pa'i) forms emanated from the treasures of (gter) the maṇḍalas (dkyil-'khor) that emerge ('byung-ba'i) as desired, in the manner of the wish-fulfilling (yid-bzhin) gem, and which for the sake of those to be trained instruct each according to his or her needs, all of them that pervade space are indeed present in this great seminal point (thig-le che) or abiding nature.

[The fifth aspect is a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas of enlightened activity. (It comments on Ch. 21.6):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.6]

HŪṂ! The great demons of all demons
Are those demons among demons who subdue demons
And also terrify their fearsome hosts.
These most terrifying (Herukas)
Are present in this great seminal point. HOḤ! [6]

[Tibetan]

HUṂ bdud-kun-gyi-ni bdud chen-po /
bdud-kyi bdung-de bdud-rnams 'joms /
'jigs-pa'i tshogs-kyang 'jigs-byed pa /
'jigs-byed chen-po thig-le che HOḤ / [6]

Commentary:

[The fifth aspect is a eulogy to all the maṇḍalas of enlightened activity.

(It comments on Ch. 21.6):]

The great demons (bdud chen-po) are so-called because they subdue the power of (gyi-ni) all (kun) four kinds of demons (bdud) including the components.[1] They are those demons (bdud-de) who subdue ('joms) the demons (bdud-rnams) of deeds and conflicting emotions because the twofold obscurations and propensities which compound saṃsāra and are the mightiest among demons (bdud-kyi) are indeed tamed;[2] and also those who terrify their fearsome hosts ('jigs-pa'i tshogs-kyang 'digs byed-pa), such as Māra and Yama. These most terrifying ('jigs-byed chen-po) Herukas are present in this great seminal point (thig-le che) because they are naturally free from extremes of conceptual elaboration.

Alternatively (this passage might be interpreted) as follows: The great demons are those such as the Lord of Desire (dga'-rab dbang-phyug) among all the demons of the Paranirmitavaśavartin realm and so forth; and the demon superior to these demons is the proud spirit Rudra. The one who terrifies his fearsome host and their wives is the terrifying Great Glorious (Heruka) himself, and he is called the great seminal point because he is present in the essence without conceptual elaboration.[3]

[ii. The particular eulogy to the mighty lord of the maṇḍala (comments on Ch. 21.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

On these "four kinds of demon" (bdud-bzhi), see above, foreword and title, note 12.

[2]:

On sgrib-gnyis, see above, foreword and title, note 13; and for an explanation of the way in which these compound saṃsāra, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 4b-7b.

[3]:

The latter explanation corresponds closely to the description of the subjugation of Rudra given in Ch. 15.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.7]

HŪM! The great rock of indestructible reality is the solidifier.
The water of indestructible reality is the great dissolver.

The fire of indestructible reality is a mighty blaze.
The air of indestructible reality is a great whirlwind. HOḤ! [7]

[Tibetan]

rdo-rje brag-chen sra-ba-po /
rdo-rje chu-bo sdud chen-po /
rdo-rje me-ste 'bar-ba che /
rdo-rje rlung-ste 'thor-rlung che HOḤ / [7]

Commentary:

[ii. The particular eulogy to the mighty lord of the maṇḍala (comments on Ch. 21.7):]

The Buddha-body of the male and female consorts Che-mchog Heruka is the great rock of indestructible reality (rdo-rje brag-chen) because it is without birth and transference at death. It is the great solidifier (sra-ba-po), blazing forth with major and minor marks, because it is free from mundane aggregates.

The Buddha-speech and attributes (of that Heruka) are the water of indestructible reality (rdo-rje chu-bo) or pristine cognition, which is the great dissolver (sdud chen-po) and satisfier of the host to be trained.

His Buddha-mind is the inwardly radiant fire of (me-ste) omniscient pristine cognition or indestructible reality (rdo-rje), which manifests all knowable things without exception, and dispels the darkness of the ignorance of living beings with a mighty blaze ('bar-ba che) of light rays of spirituality.

His enlightened activity embodies spontaneously accomplished indestructible reality (rdo-rje). It is the air (rlung) which pervades and arouses those to be trained, and it is a whirlwind ('thor-rlung) which scatters demons, extremists and so forth—one in which the goals of the four rites are entirely and spontaneously present in the Great (che) Perfection.

[Eulogy to the Supporting and Supported Maṇḍalas:]

Next, the eulogy to the maṇḍalas of supporting (celestial palace) and supported (deities) has two sections, of which the first is a eulogy to the mendala of the supported deities.

In this context, the above verses (Ch. 21.2-6) from:

HŪṂ! Most ferocious, blazing forth
Like the fire at the end of time...

Down to:

These most terrifying (Herukas)
Are present in this great seminal point.

Respectively become eulogies to the maṇḍalas of the five enlightened families of Herukas.[1]

[The second, the eulogy to the supporting celestial palace, refers to (the last verse. Ch. 21.7), in which context it is explained as follows:]

The great rock of Indestructible reality is Mount Meru composed of skeletons. The water is the ocean of blood (rakta). The fire is the fire-mountain of pristine cognition; and the air is the wheel of vital energy below (the palace), which is the basis.[2]

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 21.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

These eulogies are therefore made respectively to Vajra Heruka, Padma Heruka, Buddha Heruka, Ratna Heruka, and Karma Heruka, with their corresponding retinues.

[2]:

On the "wheel of vital energy" (rlung-gi dkyil-'khor), an energy field or maṇḍala of wind on which, according to Abhidharma, the universe is based, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2, under the Emanational Body. pp. 50a-60a.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 21.8]

Such was the song they purposefully sang. This completes the twenty-first chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real entitled A Eulogy to the Wrathful Deities. [8]

[Tibetan]

—zhes ched-du glu blangs-so / gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las khro-bo-la bstod-pa'i le'u-ste nyi-shu gcig-pa'o / [8]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 21.8):]

Such (-zhes) was the sone purposefully sane (ched-du glu-blangs-so) by the Tathāgatas. This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the twenty-first chapter (le'u ste nyi-shu gcig-pa) from the (las) resultant Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i

snying-po) Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) Buddha-body and pristine cognition, entitled A Eulogy to the Wrathful Deities (khro-bo-la bstod-pa'i) of self-manifesting pristine cognition.

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Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression to the Tathāgatas themselves, indicating that this king of the secret mantras must be firmly retained. [1]

O! O! These natures of the ten directions and four times
Are the very essence of the Tathāgata. [2]

Those who hanker for conceptual elaboration
Of the subject-object dichotomy
Enter into conceptual thoughts,
And so apprehend differences.
Distinctions are indeed arrayed in the levels,
But these are paths which progress to the Secret Nucleus. [3]

The Infinite wondrous pristine cognition
Never speaks without bringing benefit. [4]
Once this most secret nucleus, the seal
Of all the Tathāgatas has been realised.
The one who divulges it becomes me,
And the empowerments too are perfected. [5]

All the Tathāgatas do not possess
Anything other than this secret.
This real Secret Nucleus
In which exaggeration and depreciation are quiescent

Was brought forth from the definitive expanse. [6]

Those (retainers of this Tantra)
Are prophesied to become genuine beings—
Sons born from Buddha-mind
Who will abide on the excellent level
Of the awareness-holders. [7]

With these words all the Tathāgatas indivisibly rejoiced and then remained present as the expanse of sameness throughout the four times and as ornaments of the spontaneous Bounteous Array of Buddha-body, speech and mind. [8]

This completes the twenty-second chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled That Which is Pleasing and Retained. [9]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.1]

Then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One, uttered this meaningful expression to the Tathāgatas themselves, indicating that this king of the secret mantras must be firmly retained. [1]

[Tibetan]

de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos de-bzhin gshegs-pa-nyid-la
gsang-sngags-kyi rgyal-po brtan-par gzung-ba 'di ched-du brjod-do / [1]

Commentary:

[Commentary (610.6-620.1):]

The third section (of the actual exegesis of this Tantra of the Secret Nucleus—see p. 331) indicates how the tantra is taught to genuine beings and then subsequently entrusted. It has three parts, namely, the background motivation, an exegesis of the meaning of its words, and a summary of the chapter.

[The first (comments on Ch. 22.1):]

Once the maṇḍala of the Root Tantra of the Magical Net had been perfectly revealed, then the Transcendent Lord, the Great Joyous One (de-nas bcom-ldan-'das dgyes-pa chen-pos), glorious Samantabhadra, whose other epithets include Supreme Bliss, Nucleus of Indestructible Reality, First Genuine One, Original Lord, Great Vajradhara, and the Teacher,[1] uttered this meaningful expression ('di ched-du brjod-do) to the Tathāgatas themselves (de-bzhin gshegs-pa nyid-la) who comprise the five enlightened

families of the self-manifesting spontaneous Bounteous Array, their eight spiritual warriors and so forth, Indicating that this king of the secret mantras (gsang-sngags-kyi rgyal-po) must be firmly retained (brtan-par gzung-ba) in order that it might not vanish and that It might benefit living beings. In particular he gave this Instruction to the spiritual warrior of awareness, (Vajrapāṇi) the Lord of Secrets. There are some who say that the lord of Secrets is the one who explained (the Tantra) and that he then taught Vajrakarma, Vajradharma, and the glorious ones who appeared from all directions. However that is an incorrect perception. The teaching was not given to Vajrapāṇi without being elven to others. This is because in Akaniṣṭha Samantabhadra himself appeared as Vairocana, the central deity among the five enlightened families, and so he is the one who taught and explained (the tantra), and because the Lord of Secrets, who appears in the retinue, is a retainer (of the Tantra).[2]

The second part (the exegesis of the meaning of its words) teaches that this (tantra) is the result of all paths, and that it is supreme among all secrets. The former refers to both the nature of the tantra in which instruction is to be given, and the greatness of the recipient to whom instruction is given.

[The first has three aspects:]

[i. The first, teaching that this is the actual tantra of the result, (comments on Ch. 22.2):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan bde-ba chen-po, rdo-rje snying-po, dam-pa dang-po, gdod-ma'i mgon-po, and rdo-rje 'chang chen-po. On these and other epithets of Samantabhadra, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 2. pp. 41b-46b.

[2]:

On the role of Vajrapāṇi as a compiler of Mahāyoga, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 2, pp. 69-81.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.2]

O! O! These natures of the ten directions and four times
Are the very essence of the Tathāgata. [2]

[Tibetan]

k ye-k ye
phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i rang-bzhin 'di /
de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i ngo-bo-nyid / [2]

Commentary:

The second part (the exegesis of the meaning of its words) teaches that this (tantra) is the result of all paths, and that it is supreme among all secrets. The former refers to both the nature of the tantra in which instruction is to be given, and the greatness of the recipient to whom instruction is given.

[The first has three aspects:]

[i. The first, teaching that this is the actual tantra of the result, (comments on Ch. 22.2):]

O! O! (k ye-k ye) is an exclamation directed at the nature of the self-manifesting retinue, where skillful means and discriminative awareness are without duality, and which appears as the male and female consorts. All these natures of (rang-bzhin 'di) the things of apparitional existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, subsumed in the ten directions and the four times (phyogs-bcu dus-bzhi'i) are the very essence of (-'i ngo-bo-nyid) of primordial Buddha-hood in the maṇḍalas of the peaceful and wrathful deities, i.e. the male and female consorts of the five enlightened families of the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) along with their spiritual warriors. This is the Secret Nucleus of the ground, and exemplified thereby, the Secret Nucleus of the path and the result also comprise the essence of this Tantra.

[ii. The second teaching that other paths are steps in its direction (comments on Ch. 22.3):]

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.3]

Those who hanker for conceptual elaboration
Of the subject-object dichotomy
Enter into conceptual thoughts,
And so apprehend differences.
Distinctions are indeed arrayed in the levels,
But these are paths which progress to the Secret Nucleus. [3]

[Tibetan]

gzung-'dzin spros-la 'chel-ba-yis /

rnam-rtog zhags-pas so-sor 'dzin /
sa-rnams khyad-par bkod-pa yang /
gsang-ba'i snying-por 'gro-ba'i lam / [3]

Commentary:

[ii. The second teaching that other paths are steps in its direction (comments on Ch. 22.3):]

Those (-yis) living beings who hanker for conceptual elaboration (spros-la 'chel-ba) of the external object (gzung) and the internal subject ('dzin) or mind, and who then wander in the three spheres of existence, enter into (zhugs) endless conceptual thoughts (rnam-rtog) of outside, inside, extraneous entities and so forth. And so they apprehend differences (-pas so-sor 'dzin), which are suffering.

The master Dignāga says in his Eulogy to Mañjughoṣa (T. 2712):

Apart from conceptual thought.
There is nothing at all
Which is called saṃsāra.

And in the Introduction to the Madhyamaka (T. 3861) it says:

At the outset, the expression "I"
Brings attachment to the self;
And the expression "mine"
Creates attachment to objects.
Obeisance to he who resorts to compassion
For the sake of living beings
Who are powerless as a rotating irrigation wheel.[1]

In this way, when sentient beings of varying degrees of acumen, who wander in saṃsāra, apply themselves (to the teaching), hierarchical distinctions are indeed arrayed (khyad-par bkod-pa yang) in the levels (sa-rnams) and the paths of the different vehicles.

But these are paths which progress to the ('gro-ba'i lam) natural Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-por), and are not themselves the actual unerring and complete path. On their conclusion, one is obliged to enter into that (complete path).[2]

[iii. The third concerning those types to whom it must not be spoken (comments on Ch. 22.4):]

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Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan zo-chun 'phyan-ltar rang-dbang med-pa-yi.

[2]:

This clearly pinpoints kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's view of the Guhyagarbha as an Atiyoga text. Cf. NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1. pp. 17b-28a, on the theg-pa'i rim-pa dgu: and Pt. 4, pp. 169a-190a, on the superiority of Atiyoga over lower vehicles.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.4]

The Infinite wondrous pristine cognition
Never speaks without bringing benefit. [4]

[Tibetan]

ye-shes ngo-mtshar rab-'byam-kyis /
don-du mi-'gyur yong ma-gsungs / [4]

Commentary:

[iii. The third concerning those types to whom it must not be spoken (comments on Ch. 22.4):]

Since it would therefore be sufficient to teach the Secret Nucleus alone, why, one might ask, are the many enumerations of the vehicle, high and low, revealed? Because sentient beings provisionally have diverse degrees of acumen, (the vehicle) is differently revealed, satisfying each according to his or her needs. Preliminaries or steps are taught because this (Secret Nucleus) is at first extremely difficult to understand or encounter. Subsequently, in order that it should be encountered and practised, the naturally present spirituality of the teacher, Samantabhadra himself, who possesses the infinite wondrous pristine cognition (ye-shes ngo-mtshar rab-'byams-kyis) of renunciation and realisation appears in the world in the emanational body.[1] He never speaks (yongs ma-gsungs) in the slightest, or at any time, any of those doctrines which have been divulged, without bringing benefit (don-du mi-'gyur) to sentient beings.

Accordingly, it says in the Sūtra Requested By Sudatta (legs-byin zhus-pa'i mdo):

In order to benefit the world-systems
The conqueror and guide teaches the doctrine.
He pacifies desire, hatred, and delusion.
And he establishes (beings) on the path to nirvāṇa.
The great sage is one whose defects have ceased,
Who has abandoned lies, and who never has (conduct)
Which does not benefit (living beings).

The doctrine so revealed actually perceives all knowable objects

without exception, and is exclusively beneficial because the speech of the buddhas has renounced all obscurations.

Now concerning this perception of pristine cognition.

It says in the Supreme Continuum the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024):

In a single instant of knowing
It pervades all maṇḍalas of knowable objects.

As for being free from all obscurations: a Buddha is validly cognised to be one who has abandoned lies.

It says in the Ascertainment of Valid Cognition (T. 4211):

Because he has abandoned defects
He has no reason ever to tell lies.
Therefore, one should know
According to literary authorities[2]
That his defects have ceased.

In accordance with the beneficial teachings given by the Buddhas, their sons and students follow the conquerors' transmitted precepts and compose exegeses which accord with the transmitted precepts.{GL_NOTE::}

As is said in the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle (T. 4024, Ch. 5. v. 19):

There are some who teach with undistracted mind,
Referring solely to the Conqueror, the Teacher.
Conforming to the path which attains to liberation.
Let them be reverently accepted in the manner
Of the Sage's transmitted precepts.

[The second, concerning the greatness of the recipient to whom the Instruction is to be given, (comments on Ch. 22.5):]

[Read next page]
Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan spangs-pa-dang rtogs-pa'i ye-shes. As explained in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3, pp. 80b-84a, renunciation and realisation are of two kinds, one a passive fait accompli and the other a dynamic process.

[2]:

"Literary or scriptural authority" (lung. Sanskrit āgama) is recognised in Buddhist logic as a valid form of appraising objects which are "indirectly evident to an extreme degree". See NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 37b-38a.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.5]

Once this most secret nucleus, the seal
Of all the Tathāgatas has been realised.
The one who divulges it becomes me,
And the empowerments too are perfected. [5]

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi /
phyag-rgya gsang-chen [nges-pa] 'di /
rtogs-nas smra-bar gang-byed pa /
de-nyid nga-yin dbang yang-rdzogs / [5]

Commentary:

[The second, concerning the greatness of the recipient to whom the Instruction is to be given, (comments on Ch. 22.5):]

This ('di), the most secret (gsang-chen) nucleus (snying-po) of all things of the ground, path and result is the genuine seal (phyag-rgya) of the excellent body, speech, mind, attributes and activities of all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi) of the ten directions and four times. It is explained to be a seal because both its expressed meaning and expressive tantratext are hard to transgress. Inasmuch as they have been sealed by the seal of the tathāgata. It resembles, for example, the sealing of a royal edict.[2]

The Buddhasamāyoga (T. 366-367) says:

Hard to transgress and likewise imperishable.
Are the signs indicative of the Conqueror's supreme seal.
The symbolic form of Great Identity
Is thus said to be a seal.

Accordingly, once (nas) the many seals have been made and this secret truth, natural and provisional, has been realised (rtogs) by oneself incontrovertibly, the one (de-nyid) who divulges it (smra-bar gang-byed-pa) to other fortunate beings becomes (yin) me (nga) Samantabhadra, the excellent teacher of Tantra. And the empowerments (dbang) of beneficence and ability too (yang) are primordially, dispositionally and spontaneously perfected (rdzogs).

This passage indicates that the expositor of the tantra has been empowered by the Teacher in beginningless time, saying, "Even though you have not received it in this lifetime, you are empowered in the Tantra. Act on behalf of yourself and on behalf of others, because you have been blessed by me Samantabhadra in person, have attained primordial Buddha-

hood, and aspire to the profound secret truth without fear".{GL_NOTE::}

The second part (of this exegesis—see p. 1286) teaches that this is the supreme among all secrets. There are two sections, namely, the actual secret meaning and prophetic declarations concerning the genuine persons who uphold it.

[The first (comments on Ch. 22.6):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The motivations behind the composition of such treatises (bstan-bcos) and the transmitted precepts (bka') with which their different categories accord are discussed at length in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 28a-41a.

[2]:

Teachings of buddhas such as Śākyamuni are said to have "four seals indicative of the transmitted precepts" (bka'-rtags phyag-rgya bzhi). namely that all compounded phenomena are impermanent, all corruption is suffering, all things are without self, and nirvāṇa is peace.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.6]

All the Tathāgatas do not possess

Anything other than this secret.

This real Secret Nucleus

In which exaggeration and depreciation are quiescent

Was brought forth from the definitive expanse. [6]

[Tibetan]

de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-la /

gsang-ba 'di-las gzhan mi-mnga' /

sgro-dang skur-ba zhi-ba-yi /

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na /

nyid-de nges-pa'i dbyings-nas phyung / [6]

Commentary:

[The first (comments on Ch. 22.6):]

All the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-le) of the ten directions and four times do not possess anything other than this ('di-las

gzhan mi-mnga') genuine tantra, which is the conclusive secret (gsang-ba) of Buddha-body, speech, mind, attributes and activities. Therefore one should retain that which is supreme and genuine.

This actually refers to the tantra of the ground where all things are Buddha-hood in the secret nucleus of primordial sameness. It is the conclusive truth to be established by all the conquerors.[2]

Now, among the collection of texts, there are those in which the teacher applied exaggeration (sgro) to the profound truth from the extreme standpoint of eternalism, and (dang) there are those in which he applied depreciation (skur-ba) to it from the extreme standpoint of nihilism. However, this Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) transcends intellectually conceived objects because its primordially empty and selfless nature is quiescent of (zhi-ba-yi) all conceptual elaborations including those which posit both existence and non-existence and those which posit neither of them. This real (de-kho-na-nyid de) nature of all things was brought forth (phyung) as a truth to be expressed by the teacher from the definitive expanse (nges-pa'i dbyings-nas) of unthinkable inexpressible reality.[3]

Accordingly, it says in the Ornament of Emergent Realisation (T. 3786):

This profound nature is itself free
From the extremes of exaggeration and depreciation.

And in the Root Stanzas of Madhyamaka, entitled Discriminative Awareness (T. 3824):

Absence of extraneous perception.
Quiescence, absence of conceptual thought,
Non-differentiation, and absence of conceptual elaboration—
These are the characteristics of this (reality).

And in the Sūtra of the Adornment of Pristine Cognition's Appearance (T. 100):

Phenomena are uncreated
And thoroughly quiescent like space.
Such is the perceptual range of those who see the ultimate.
The conqueror and guide reveals this uncorrupted quiescence
From the expanse of just what is.

These twenty-two chapters of expressive verses, comprising the profound genuine view and extensive conduct in which exaggeration and depreciation with regard to the real nature are quiescent, are secret to unworthy recipients and revealed to those who are worthy recipients. Their nature is the nucleus of all things, the reality of ground, path and result. They are brought forth from an indefinite expanse within the expanse of Samantabhadra's Buddha-mind; and are simultaneously spoken for the sake of those to be trained in the retinue.[4]

[Next, the prophetic declarations concerning the genuine persons who

uphold this Secret Nucleus, (comments on Ch. 22.7):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This aspiration resembles the mandate received by gter-ston, who, according to the lineage known as bka'-babs lung-bstan, are entrusted with the central intention of their discoveries and subsequently encouraged through prophetic declarations. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 6, pp. 511ff.; also T. Thondup, Hidden Teachings of Tibet. p. 64.

[2]:

On the continuum of the ground, see above, pp. 20ff.; also NSTB, Book 1. Pt. 4, pp. 147b-150b.

[3]:

On the differing degrees of intention (abhiprāya) with which different texts are motivated and the distinction between the provisional and ultimate meaning of texts, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 3. PP. 116b-121a.

[4]:

The "indefinite time" (ma-nges-pa'i dus) at which this teaching is disseminated is discussed above, pp. 354-357.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.7]

Those (retainers of this Tantra)

Are prophesied to become genuine beings—

Sons born from Buddha-mind

Who will abide on the excellent level

Of the awareness-holders. [7]

[Tibetan]

de-ni nges-par lung-bstan-te /

sras-ni thugs-las skyes-pa yin /

sa-rab rig-pa 'dzin-la gnas / [7]

Commentary:

[Next, the prophetic declarations concerning the genuine persons who uphold this Secret Nucleus, (comments on Ch. 22.7):]

Those (de-ni) individuals who retain and teach this tantra are prophesied (lung-bstan-te) to become the absolutely genuine (nges-par) beings of awareness who will teach it to others, and to attain Buddha-hood without impediment in a single lifetime, liberating themselves.[1]

As our text says (Ch. 22.5):

The one who divulges it becomes me.
And the empowerments too are perfected.

And in the Indestructible Reality (NGB. Vol. 15):

Whoever practises this doctrinal tradition
Will attain perfect Buddha-hood in this lifetime.

And in the Mirror of Indestructible Reality (T. 833):

In order to reveal the meaning
Of intrinsic awareness or pristine cognition,
The self-manifesting awareness is actualised.
Even without the power or ability
To contemplate spontaneous presence
As a supreme awareness-holder.
The spiritual warrior who refines the (Bodhisattva) levels
Without deviating, will obtain a prophetic declaration
That he or she will become a being of awareness
With the same perceptual range as the Sugatas themselves.[2]

Such individuals are the genuine sons (sras-ni) of all the Buddhas, because they are born from (las-skyes-ca yin) this amazing secret nature of Buddha-mind (thugs), just as for example the eldest son of a universal monarch is born as his regent. Provisionally, those individuals enter into the levels, they abide on the levels, and they become mature in the levels; and then conclusively they will turn to the supreme excellent level (sa-rab) of the result, which is called Holder of Indestructible Reality (rdo-rje 'dzin-pa). They will abide on (-la gnas) that conclusive (level), which is also called the "level of supreme skillful means and discriminative awareness", and the "level of the awareness-holders" (rig-pa-'dzin).[3]

The words "The one who divulges it becomes me" indicate that from the very present moment the teacher who expounds the tantra abides on the level of the awareness-holders because that one is said to be Samantabhadra himself. Although the enlightened attributes of those individuals appear not to be entirely perfect, they are in fact perfect because they have attained Buddha-hood primordially in the maṇḍala of the buddhas. For example, just as when a pauper perseveres to extract a treasure of gemstones, located underground or in a house, he lives during that period as a pauper because the (object of his) enjoyment is not visible. However, when he has actually possessed that great treasure, he is endowed with riches. Similarly, it should be explained that the excellent level of the awareness-holders abides within oneself, and that by striving to actualise it and entering therein, one is said to abide on the excellent

level of the awareness-holders. The great Tantrapaṭakas do not explain by one-sided eternalist or extremist dogmas that only one specific enumeration (of the result) is definitive. The verses of indestructible reality are profound and may be applied in any context whatsoever.[4]

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 22.8):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

See above. Ch. 12, pp. 959-976 on the meaning of Vidyādhara; and on the use of the term rig-pa'i skyes-bu as an epithet for the six sages, see NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 1, pp. 1618.

[2]:

Expositors of this tantra who pursue the bodhisattva path are therefore predicted to attain samyaksambuddhatva, whether or not they have yet become "awareness-holders" of the anābhoga type.

[3]:

On these different names for the thirteenth level. see above, pp. 967-968.

[4]:

On the multidimensional meaning of the vajrapādas, see NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 4, pp. 166b-169a.

Text 22.8 (Commentary)

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.8]

With these words all the Tathāgatas indivisibly rejoiced and then remained present as the expanse of sameness throughout the four times and as ornaments of the spontaneous Bounteous Array of Buddha-body, speech and mind. [8]

[Tibetan]

—zhes brjod-pas / de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad dbyer-med-par dgyes-nas dus-bzhi mnyam-pa-nyid-kyi dbyings / sku-gsung-thugs-kyi lhun-stug-po bkod-pa'i rgyan-nyid-du bzhugs-so / [8]

Commentary:

[The summary of the chapter (comments on Ch. 22.8):]

Once the teacher of this tantra had completed the exegesis of his great deeds, he revealed his continuing presence. Now, some Sūtras and Tantrapiṭakas, after their exegeses, simply reveal that the retinuees subsequently rejoice and manifestly praise (the teacher). They indicate that there is an alternation in time because other modes of conduct are clearly assumed.

It says in the Lasso of Skillful Means (T. 835) that the maṇḍala is absorbed and then becomes invisible:

Entering into the heart of that being.
It becomes invisible.

Those (texts) alternate in their teachers, teachings, retinuees, times and places. They are inferior because they become extraneous to the Teacher himself. Their doctrines, too, are diverse, and the locations (in which they are taught) are compounded by the perception of those to be trained.[1]

However, in order to reveal that this is more secret and superior to those ordinary teachings, the point of this tantra that is expressed with these words (zhes-brjod-pas) is as follows: All (thams-cad) the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa) of the five enlightened families, arrayed as self-manifesting inner radiance, who, as many as sesame seeds, fill the extremes and centre of space, did not relate dualistically, but in essence they indivisibly rejoiced (dbyer-med-par dgyes). Then (nas) their perfect spontaneous nature in the ground of unchanging disposition manifested as the Buddha-field of the expanse (dbyings) of space without extremes or centre, where there is sameness (mnyam-pa-nyid-kyi) of the cycle of reality throughout the four times (dus-bzhi): and all their arrays remained present (bzugs-so), subsequently just as they previously were, as ornaments (rgyan-nyid-du) of the spontaneous Bounteous Array (lhun stug-po bkod-pa'i) derived from the nature of (-kyi) the inexhaustible wheels of adornment—the Buddha-body, speech and mind (sku-gsung-thugs) of the Teacher himself.[2]

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 22.9):]

[Read next page]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

The point is that the concluding words of this text are in harmony with the concept of "indefinite time", so that the tantra or continuum is thought to have no cessation.

[2]:

See the description of Ghanavyūha above, pp. 357ff.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Text section 22.9]

This completes the twenty-second chapter from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, entitled That Which is Pleasing and Retained. [9]

[Tibetan]

gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las mnyes-pa-dang yongs-su bzung-ba'i le'u-ste nyi-shu gnyis-pa'o / [9]

Commentary:

[The conclusion (comments on Ch. 22.9):]

This completes (-'o) the exegesis of the twenty-second chapter (le'u-ste nyi-shu rtsa-gnyis-pa) from (las) the Secret Nucleus (gsang-ba'i snying-po) of the Buddha-field Definitive with respect to the Real (de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) self-manifesting nature of pristine cognition. It is entitled That Which is Pleasing (mnyes-pa) because (the Teacher's) intention continues to be present after his deeds have been completed, and Retained (dang yongs-su bzung-ba'i) by the retinue because the tantras are entrusted so that they do not disappear.

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[Guhyagarbha-Tantra, Conclusion]

This concludes the supreme result within those promulgations of the doctrinal wheel, in which all (vehicles) without exception emanate, from the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, the secret nature of all the Tathāgatas, the general transmission of all the dialectics and tantras, derived from the Hundred Thousand Chapters of the kingly Magical Net of sublime realisation.

[Tibetan]

'phags-pa rtogs-pa'i rgyal-po sgyu-'phrul drva-ba le'u stong-phrag brgya-pa-las mtshan-nyid-dang rgyud thams-cad-kyi lung-gi spyi de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi gsang-ba gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa-las thams-cad ma-lus-par 'phros-te 'khor-lo bskor-ba de-dag-gi 'bras-bu'i mchog / [10]

Commentary:

Finally, there is the perfect conclusion (of this commentary-see p. 318). It has three sections, of which the first concerns the tantra-cycle to which this Secret Nucleus belongs.

This Tantra of expressive verses is indeed said to be sublime ('phags-pa) because it reveals primordial Buddha-hood, the meaning of indivisible truth, more sublime than other expressed meanings. All the tantras of skillful means through which mundane and supramundane accomplishments are attained are said to have realisation (rtogs-pa), but this one belongs within and is derived from the Great Tantra of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva in one Hundred Thousand Chapters (rdo-rje sems-dpa' sgyu-'phrul dra-ba'i rgyud chen-po), which is the kingly realisation (rtogs-pa'i rgyal-po) because it is supreme among them all.[1]

The second section concerns the supplements of this (Great Tantra): Within that (cycle of the Magical Net), this (Tantra the Secret Nucleus) is called the general transmission (lung-gi spyi) because it is the emanational basis or source of the causal vehicle of dialectics (mtshan-nyid) and of all the tantras (-dang rgyud thams-cad-kyi) of the resultant way of secret mantras. It Itself is the secret nature (gsang-ba) of the indestructible body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas (de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi) of the ten directions and four times. It is supremely sublime, and it demonstrates topics which are most profound and extensive. Therefore it is called the Chapter of the Secret Nucleus, Definitive with respect to the Real (gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa) ground, path and result. From it (las) all (thams-cad) the inconceivable vehicles emanate ('phros-te) and are revealed without exception (ma-lus-par). Thus it is the basis of them all.[2]

The third section teaches that it is the supreme result: The conquerors for the sake of living beings have made those (de-dag) inestimable promulgations of the doctrinal wheel ('khor-lo bskor-ba) of the Magical Net in One Hundred Thousand Chapters and so forth, within (-gi) which this great Tantra of the Secret Nucleus is perfected as the supreme (mchog) basis of the resultant ('bras-bu i) unsurpassed secret Mantras.[3] This concludes the excellent establishment, (of the Tantra of the Secret Nucleus).

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

This extensive version of the sgyu-'phrul dra-ba is said to be that from which all eighteen Tantrapīṭakas of Mahāyoga are derived. See above, 33-58, 72-74.

[2]:

On the position of the Guhyagarbha within the Māyājāla cycle, see above, pp. 37-59.

[3]:

I.e. the Anuttarayogatantra.

Epilogue

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Through the spirituality of the conquerors,
The profound and extensive meaning of this Tantra.
The utterly marvelous, infinite
And most secret nature of Himamahāsāgara,[1]
Who, in the perceptual range of those of sublime intelligence.
Is quiescent like space, entirely unblemished.
Inwardly radiant from the beginning, uncompounded.
And who quantitatively perceives (phenomena)
And qualitatively perceives (the view).
Was manifested to living beings,
And it somewhat illuminated this Range of Snow Mountains.[2]

That meaning has been adorned by the golden net
Of the eloquence of successive scholars.
Yet even now the doctrinal ocean of word and meaning.
Hard to traverse, is not entirely clear.
A most secret treasury.
Extremely hard to realise.
This is not an object of perception for all beings.
But it is the supreme and most secret (nature)
Which abides in the minds of those beings
Who belong to the enlightened families.

The forms of its variegated word and meaning
Have manifested here, in the lotus grove of my intellect.[3]
Illuminated by a share of bliss, which resembles
The reflection of the moon arising in a clear pool.
And is filled with its entirely pure maṇḍala
Which permeates and adorns these waters.
It is ornamented by the deities' display
And their most marvelous and purest spirituality.

Accordingly, at the request of the genuine one
bLo-bzang dGe-ba'i 'Byung-gnas, a supreme student of good fortune.
And Śāk-ya Ye-shes bZang-po who is supreme among the faithful.
Praiseworthy for their generosity,
A Yogin who experiences the truth of just what is
Has brought forth the nature of this Tantra
And its profound meaning,
And then established it in the place called O-rgyan rDzong,
At the neck of Gangs-ri Thod-dkar, core of gemstones.[4]

Although the truth of just what is has been divulged,
Contradiction and error are naturally present

Because the meaning of the Tantra and its verses
Of indestructible reality are profound;
For I have not obtained the sublime level.
May I therefore be forgiven by the conquerors.
Their sons, the host of gurus, and all those
Who possess supreme Intelligence,
As well as by the cloud-mass of Ḍākinīs
Generated by pristine cognition
And the oceanic oath-bound (protectors).

In a past life in the forest of Bhelaheta
In the eastern direction of Kāmarūpa,
As Mahāmitra, a follower and student of Padma,
I learned all the points of outer and inner accomplishment.[5]

Comins thence to this land, I had a genuine intellect
In which the Sūtras and tantras were dispositionally clear.
Mollified by nectar which is the nucleus of profound meaning,
I venerated this tradition of the Secret Nucleus.[6]

Nowadays, the treasure of gemstones.
Which is the Conqueror's teaching.
Has nearly vanished,[7] though it does possess
A thousand lights of spiritual and temporal well-being
And even the eyes of excellent beings are mostly closed.
Since doctrinal traditions like this are rare anywhere.
Earnestly develop study, thought and essential meaning.

Ever impermanent, the lifespan of living creatures moves on.
It disintegrates like a bursting bubble.
And one wanders through existences
In a cycle of happiness and suffering.
But on the death of saṃsāra.
One passes beyond that existence
To the grove of blissful peace.[8]
This is why one should prepare with perseverance,
And Instead enter upon the excellent path of liberation.
Disillusioned with existence from today.
Determine from this very moment
That one is powerless to remain even for a day.[9]

Striving in all ways, try to accomplish well
All excellent attributes of clear light—
The most marvelous, clear and profound oceanic treasure,
Which is that of Jñānahimamahāśāgara,[10]
Among (all Buddhas) who are endowed with treasure-stores.

At all times one should please the genuine unsurpassed Guru
Who performs the deeds of the conquerors of the three times.
Guard the commitments and vows appropriately
And without transgression.
Meditate on pure superior thought,
And profound superior contemplation.[11]

By this excellently taught doctrinal tradition of quiescence,
The pleasant sounding drumbeat of Brahmā,
May the three world-realms intoxicated by the sleep
Of ignorance awake instantly therefrom.
May they abide on the level of genuine pristine cognition,
Reach the conclusion of the original ground.
And manifest the maṇḍala of the Buddha-body of form
Within the immaculate expanse of the body of reality.

May the outer containing world and its inner sentient contents
Be naturally pure without exception
In the fields of the five enlightened families.
May conflicting emotions be immaculate pristine cognition.
And recollection and awareness be the supreme maṇḍala of Buddha-
mind.
May the two suddenly arisen obscurations be purified
Because they are primordially present and radiant as such;
And may all things, existing nowhere apart from in name.
Become Samantabhadra himself.

By this excellent composition, an array which clarifies
This original manifest awakening,
A glorious joyful meadow of non-dual nature
Throughout the ten directions and four times.
May living beings become well absorbed
In the expanse of quiescence.
Naturally and without effort.
May the lotus of Buddha-hood enclose them
Because Buddha-body and pristine cognition
Are without conjunction or disjunction.

This natural Secret Nucleus, well taught.
Is a most radiant palanquin of clouds
Of glorious enlightened attributes.
With a bountiful downpour of spiritual and temporal well-being
Which fills space with the motion of its activity.
By the merit of its extensive exegesis
May all creatures of infinite space
Obtain the abode of Samantabhadra.[12]
May they cross the ocean of existence
With its deeds and conflicting emotions;
May they accomplish the levels, paths, retentions, and contemplations.
May they perfect all hopes, provisional and conclusive.
And see the pure fields entirely filled by conquerors.

May the host of obstructing spirits, elementals.
Ogres and Dākas be pacified.
May they be well endowed with longevity, glory, and fortune.
And by rites of pacification, enrichment, subjugation and wrath.
May the supreme gemstone of the twofold benefit
Excellently emerge for living beings.

May this doctrinal tradition also perform acts of benefit.
Which, for the sake of living beings.
Endure as long as space itself endures.
And may all directions be pervaded
By great spontaneous deeds which resemble
The supreme sun and moon, and a supreme vase
Of wish-fulfilling gemstones.

May this tradition continually benefit others
For as long as the River Ganges continues.
Like the supreme nectar of the stars
May it dispel the torments of conflicting emotion:
Like a cloud-mass of wish-fulfilling gemstones
May it fulfil the hopes for all that is desired:
And like the supreme sun of the four terrestrial continents,[13]
May it dispel the darkness of the expanse of the mind.

This doctrinal tradition, like the form of the autumn moon,[14]
Has a band of constellations of eloquence.
The jasmin flowers of clear Intelligence are opened
By its white light of radiant meanings.
Without obscurations and defective aspects.
It is the glorious one, dispelling the darkness of ignorance.
Propelled by a carriage drawn by five horses of intelligence,
It illuminates those living beings who are fortunate.

May those who wish to know the outer and inner meanings,
And those who wish to behold through the eye of analysis
The very meaning of just what is.
Present in the oceanic textual tradition.
Greatly increase their joyous intelligence
When they perceive this doctrinal tradition.
May they become extremely learned in the tradition
Of its variegated words and meanings, known and unknown.

One who desires to cross to the other side
Of the ocean of the meaning of Tantra
Should embark on this precious ship of eloquence.
And unfurling the sails of profound meaning
Should correctly acquire the two kinds of benefit.
Which accord with its word and meaning.

The meaning of Tantra, in this work
Is a supreme ocean of milk.
Well churned by the fine analysis of my own intellect.
Distilled into elixir like the disposition of the nucleus.
It has been manifested for living beings of the future.
Unbiased, it clarifies all meanings.
Unknown externally, it is devoted to others' benefit.
The meaning of this doctrine is not found externally,
But it is perceived as external.
It is not a defective exegesis, but an ocean of eloquence.

Like a palace of variegated gems of pristine cognition,
Like a rainbow, or nighttime.
Like supremely bright variegated sunlight.
And a meadow of nectar-like moon-beams—
This nature of ground, path and result
Has been well illustrated.
The supreme meaning of the secret Great Perfection
Is this genuine Secret Nucleus.
Which reveals all things in a single nature.

More beautiful than a web of lotus flowers
Touching the nucleus of the stars,
And endowed with a most secret store of nectar.
Which is an offering of gods, humans or any beings.
This path which reaches the resultant Secret Nucleus
For all who have been the mothers of the conquerors,[15]
Is an extensive tradition, excellently taught.
And hailed as supreme by the great ones.

All who enter this path become supremely fortunate
And abide as awareness-holders of the excellent level.
They are venerated by the foremost beings in the supreme
World-systems of gods and humans, and by those who are sages.
Endowed with the resultant twofold benefit in this lifetime,
They become the extensive genuine beings of the Buddha-fields.
The storehouse in which these attributes emerge
Is therefore this ocean-like exegesis.

Those who wish for liberation should reverently accept
This supreme doctrinal tradition as a crown ornament.
Its excellent virtues extensively appear.
Emanating as the wish-fulfilling clouds of autumn.
Its diverse light-rays permeate all directions
And illuminate ten million Buddha-fields.
All those without exception who are steadfast in this path
Will accomplish the supreme excellent result.
Strongly exhorted by all the lords of the ten directions,
This has been composed at the behest of all.[16]

This commentary entitled "an analysis of the kingly Magical Net, the glorious Tantra of the Secret Nucleus Definitive with respect to the Real, which actually dispels all the darkness of the ten directions through the great appearance of its sunlit and moonlit clouds" (dpal gsang-ba'i snying-po de-kho-na-nyid nges-pa'i rgyud-kyi rgyal-po sgyu-phrul drya-ba'i rnam-bshad nyi-zla'isprin-gyi snang-ba chen-pos phyogs-bcu'i mun-pa thams-cad nges-par sel-ba) is a natural lotus-lake of intelligence, filled with the growing flowers of extensive study and excellent refinement in the ocean-like traditions of mantra and transcendental perfection.[17] It was brought forth in the clearest manner by the intellect of rDo-rje gZi-brjid,[18] a Yogin of the greater vehicle, who for the benefit of others has subsumed the many great commentaries of the past, the collection of the manifest eloquence of his gurus, and the essence of many tantras, literary transmissions and esoteric instructions. This excellent work was completed

at the neck-like (geomantic centre) of Gangs-ri Thod-dkar at sunrise on the auspicious fifteenth day of the first autumn month in the dragon year.[19]

Footnotes and references:

[1]:

Tibetan [ye-shes] gangs-chen mtsho or Vairocana in the form of Jñānahimamahāsāgara, said to be the frame around which all world-systems appear. See above. Ch. 1. note 79; also NSTB. Book 1, Pt. 2, pp. 53b-54a; Book 2, Pt. 1. pp. 10-11.

[2]:

Gangs ri'i khrod, of course, indicates Tibet.

[3]:

I.e. that of kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa.

[4]:

O-rgyan rDzong is the celebrated cave and hermitage of kLong-chen-pa at Gangs-ri Thod-dkar, situated above 'On-chang-rdo Lha-khang in the mountain range known as Tibet's Ri-bo rtse-lnga. See the biography in NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 238-277; A. Ferrari et. al., Mk'yen Brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet. pp. 73. 166. The expressions "neck" (mgul) and "core of gemstones" (rin-cen snying-po) liken this location to a geomantic centre. On the geomantic centres of Tibet, see dPa'-bo gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston. Vol. Cha, 35a-39bff.; also M. Aris, Bhutan, pp. 15-41.

[5]:

Tibetan kang-ru'i shar-phyogs, kLong-chen-pa claims that formerly, before his series of lives in Tibet, as a direct student of Padmasambhava he had mastered the teachings of the outer and inner vehicles.

[6]:

On kLong-chen-pa's former lives in Tibet, especially as Padma Las-'bral rtal, and his discovery of the mkha'-'gro snying-thig, see NSTB, Book 2. Pt. 4, pp. 213-215,

[7]:

Until kLong-chen-pa's extensive dissemination of, and compositions on, the philosophy and history of the rNying-ma school, there were few such lineages during the fourteenth century. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4.

[8]:

Tibetan zhi-bde'i nags-khrod is a synonym for quiescence or nirvāṇa.

[9]:

Concerning the analytic meditation on Impermanence (mi-rtag-pa, Sanskrit anitya) and its benefits, see e.g., Mi-pham rNam-rgyal, byed-sgom 'khor-lo-ma: Sgam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, pp. 41-54.

[10]:

Tibetan mdzod-ldan-rnams-kyi ye-shes gangs-can-mtsho.

[11]:

Tibetan Ihag-bsam rnam-dag Ihag-pa'i ting-'dzin zab-mo bsgom. This phrase, in combination with the previous verse on commitments and vows, indicates the three correct trainings (yang-dag-pa'i bslab-pa gsum) of superior śīla, citta, and prajñā. See also NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 16ab.

[12]:

For skye-rgu yongs-kyi read skye-rgu yongs-kyis.

[13]:

I.e. Pūrvavideha in the east, Jambudvīpa in the south, Aparagodanīya in the west, and Uttarakuru in the north. See the chart in NSTB, Book 1, Introduction.

[14]:

Tibetan ston-ka'i ri-bong 'dzin-gzugs.

[15]:

Tibetan rgyal-ba'i yum-gyur kun-gyi.

[16]:

Among the various motivations which justify the composition of treatises, outlined in NSTB, Book 1, Pt. 1, pp. 28a-41a, there are those composed after prophetic declarations and exhortations have been obtained. The works of kLong-chen-pa are considered within this category.

[17]:

"mantra and transcendental perfection" (sngags-dang pha-rol-du phyin-pa'i tshul), respectively mantranaya and pāramitānaya, indicate the resultant and causal vehicles. See NSTB, Book 1, Pts. 3-4.

[18]:

The name given to kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa by Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal in a vision concerning the redaction of the mkha'-'gro snying-thig. See NSTB, Book 2, Pt. 4, pp. 238-277 and notes.

[19]:

This dragon year would have to be either 1340, the year in which he taught the snying-thig teachings at bSam-yas mChims-phu, or 1352. Since the biography clearly states that he moved to Gangs-ri Thod-dkar after this initial dissemination of Atiyoga, and then systematically arranged his writings and discoveries in that location, the latter date is the more likely. The first autumn month (ston-zla ra-ba) indicates the seventh month of that year. According to the tables in D. Schuh, *Untersuchungen Zur Geschichte Tibetischen Kalenderrechnung*, the fifteenth day of that month would correspond to 28 July, 1352.—The edition of the commentary is concluded at this point by a eulogy in praise of the author and a further colophon, added by 'Gyur-med rDo-rje, the son of A-dzom 'Brug-pa Grub-dbang Dri-med kLong-yangs who had been responsible for publishing this edition but had died during the printing of its final pages.

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